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DUTIES, TESTS, AND COMFORTS.

BY REV. DAYTON F. REED,
OF THE NEWARK ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

WITH

An Introduction,

BY REV. J. MCCLINTOCK, D.D.

SECOND EDITION.



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INTRODUCTION.

IN spite of a reluctance to writing Introductions, which may hereafter be imperative, I have consented to furnish a brief one for this book. The Author has spent nearly twenty years in itinerant and laborious preaching, though he is unknown to the public as a writer. His line of life has not been favorable to literary pursuits, simply as such; the Methodist preacher's task is, in the language of the Discipline, not so much to gain knowledge as to win souls. His chief business is to preach the Gospel, and to that he devotes himself—studying how to impress listless minds, rather than to round periods; how to convey truth surely, and to fix it deeply, rather than to clothe it elegantly. In this field of labor the Author has been a faithful worker. And his industry has brought its natural fruit

to his own mind, in a large acquaintance with men, in a clear insight into the wants of the Church, and in a wide knowledge of the sources both of the Church's weakness and of the Church's power.

The work now offered to the public is no hasty production. For many years the Author has had his mind fixed upon certain great lines of Christian thought; and he has been largely useful in conveying them to the minds of his hearers in oral discourse. That religion is a practical thing; that it is to rule our every-day life, our studies, our habits, our business, our modes of getting and spending, our plans of life, and our schemes of profit—as well as to be seen in our church-going, and to be heard from our lips: this conviction is deeply incorporated with the Author's whole habit of thinking and feeling. And his book is but the utterance of this conviction.

Its title classes it at once with books of *practical* religion. There are two sorts of books to which this term is applied; viz. such as treat of personal religion and its experience in the soul,

and such as exhibit piety in its fruits and activities in life. The present work falls under the latter division: it is, in fact, in the main, an exhibition of the ethical side of Christianity—an application of its principles to the conduct of life. Its lessons come home “to the business and bosoms” of men. It views Christianity not as a theory, but as a life; not only as bringing precious promises, but also as laying down irreversible laws. In a word, the object of the book is not so much to proclaim the privileges of Christianity as to set forth its duties; or, rather, to show that the enjoyment of its privileges is made absolutely dependent, by the Great Master himself, upon the performance of its duties.

The reader will see that a large part of the volume is taken up by two Essays on Christian Benevolence, the remainder being occupied by shorter pieces, on personal practical religion. He will see also, on closer inspection, that there is a certain unity of aim throughout all these papers, however various their titles may be. While they constitute a miscellany for desultory

readers, a consecutive perusal will disclose a connection through the book. The steady aim is to enforce upon Christians the duty of an absolute consecration of their persons and their property, of their time and their talents, of themselves and their children, to the service of Almighty God on this earth. This great thought shows itself, more or less, in every page of the book. The writer sees that the progress of the Church is hindered in every land by the selfishness of men professing to be Christians, by the want of enlarged views of Christian duty, and by the general prevalence of low and earthly aims, even among those who claim to be "the ransomed of the Lord." The great work to be done, before the Ark of the Lord can move on at its predestined speed to its final resting-place, is to settle, in the mind of every member of Christ's Church on earth, the true law of that Church; to bring each individual Christian up to the mark of personal consecration which that law fixes; to convince every believer that, amid all the sympathies of life, whether social or intellectual, there ought to be *one* master

sympathy—and that an earnest yearning for the progress of the kingdom of Christ. The pages that follow are full of lessons to this purport.

The scope and style of the book are in harmony with its aim. The first paper is an Essay on “Enlarged Beneficence.” Books on this topic, and on kindred subjects, have been multiplied of late; but there is still room for more. On a theme so important, and coming in contact so directly with long-established habits and modes of thought, we need “line upon line and precept upon precept.” Without in any respect disparaging any of the excellent books that have recently appeared on Christian beneficence, I can honestly say that the Author’s treatment of the subject has merits of its own which do not appear in any of the others, and will doubtless make its impression upon many minds which would not be reached by existing publications. His exhibition of *enlarged* as distinguished from *systematic* beneficence, is an instance. He shows that it is our duty to bestow *largely* of our means for the advancement of

Christ's kingdom, first, from the teachings of Scripture. The summary, given in a few pages (pp. 23-25), is wonderfully impressive. It runs as follows. Riches are God's; if he lends them to man, he *will* have an account of them; their right use is a necessary condition of the Divine blessing; and, finally, the direst woes will follow their misuse. Equally impressive are the examples drawn from Scripture history. The Author urges us to imitate them, by the needs of the Church, by the wretched condition of the Pagan world, and by the worthiness of the Church's great enterprises for the spread of the Gospel. Not satisfied with this, he presses upon us the weight of our obligations to God's mercy and to Christ's blood, and beseeches us, for our own souls' sake, to love Christ more and money less.

Equally direct and forceful is his method of setting forth the duty of Systematic Benevolence. It is first shown to be obligatory; and then brilliant examples of its actual performance are narrated. The next step is to show the grand results that would follow, to the

Church, to individual Christians, and to the world at large, from the general adoption of system in our Christian giving. The excuses of penurious souls are laid bare with merciless, yet deserved severity. A few “loving” yet “plain-dealing” remarks, addressed to wavering and endangered readers, close the Essay.

The spirit in which the Author writes is perhaps best stated by the two epithets quoted above—loving, and plain-dealing. The book is animated throughout by a burning love for God and for the souls of men; everywhere it is clear that “it is the love of Christ that constraineth” the pen of the writer. And his charity for his readers, of all classes, even those who may be least willing to heed his admonitions, is equally obvious throughout. Indeed, it is to save *them*, as well as to incite them to good works in saving others, that he writes. But his charity is accompanied by too deep and pungent a conviction of the vast importance of the subject, and the need of a thorough awakening with regard to it on the part of the Church, to allow him to “prophesy smooth things” to

the Lord's people. Indeed, the book is terribly in earnest; and this, of all others, is the essential requisite for a book of practical religion. Without this holy earnestness, all charms of style, all beauties of diction, all harmonious turns of thought or phrase, are sad mockeries in a writer professing to teach duty to dying men. But under its impulse, a man of comparatively little cultivation has words of power always at command; his strokes are aimed directly at the mark, and every blow tells upon its object.

I commend this book to the Christian public as eminently practical and truthful. It cannot fail to do good to all that read it attentively; and there is in it a holy power of Christian sympathy and earnestness that will *command* the reader, unless his heart is utterly out of harmony with the great laws of God's kingdom.

J. MCCLINTOCK.

PHILADELPHIA, December 12, 1856.

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AN ESSAY
ON
ENLARGED BENEFICENCE.

CHAPTER I.

IMPORTANCE OF THE THEME.

THE great channel by which the vehement selfishness of this age finds vent is money-getting. To this tend the wishes and pursuits of all grades of society; from the newsboy to the stock-jobber; from the idle street-beggar to the panting gold-digger; from the peasant with his mind on products and prices, to the prince plotting for power.

The sway of Mammon extends from California to Australia. Over other false gods,

“High on a throne of royal state,”

he sits. It is a wide-spread opinion that, in our day, wealth is the principal idol. In a sister church, and

in another nation, a great man—the same who had the magnanimity to pronounce Methodism “Christianity in earnest”—has expressed the general sentiment of pious and discerning minds: “Wealth is the goddess whom all the world worshippeth. There is many a city in our empire of which, with an eye of apostolic discernment, it may be seen that it is almost wholly given over to idolatry.”¹ To help to show the danger of Christians and others from this source, and their only safeguard, is the object of this and of a succeeding Essay.²

The importance of the theme is heightened by the fact that giving money aright is essential not only to the dethronement of the idol wealth, but to the extension of the grandest work upon earth—the enthronement of the true God in hundreds of millions of hearts. Let us see.

Is not the most important work in this world, if not in the universe, the salvation of immortal spirits? A spirit is the sublimest product of the Divine hand.

¹ Chalmers's Works, vol. vi. p. 204.

² It is hoped that readers belonging to other denominations of Christians, or to none, will not slight these pages, if some remarks occur more specially applicable to members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Even in such remarks the design is, as in other parts of the book, to deal with truths of universal obligation.

Surely, when God creates something like himself, he will go no higher, as to kind, in creation. And a spirit, though it may have lost the moral features of the Divine image, still exists as a real something upon which that image was once enstamped. God has determined that this something shall not be annihilated. Think of its value. No matter how restricted its present dimensions, if it is capable of continued growth. We know it to be thus capable, on earth. And may it not grow eternally in heaven? Will not heaven be as favorable for its development as earth, while God, the soul's portion, infinite in all possible perfections, will be the source of ceaseless accumulations of knowledge and goodness? The idea of an atom expanding to fill all known space would be inadequate for a comparison. We have in view not only something, which in its nature is incomparably above matter, however sublimated, but an increase of it beyond any limits which the mind can possibly set—an increase, not in creation, but in the boundless Creator.

What a salvation, then, has Christianity to proffer! What a work to be done upon the children of men! If you find a lack of means for its spread over the earth, you indeed find a deficiency deeply to be deprecated. But is the great work hindered? It is, "if Jesus Christ tasted death for every man," and has

adapted His gospel to all, and commanded it to be published "to every creature," and yet there remains a single man deprived of it. How, then, alas ! is it hindered, while there is deprived of it a large majority of mankind—a number so vast as to send into eternity, every year, more benighted souls than is the whole population of the United States ! There is, indeed, a hindrance somewhere. Is it in the Holy Trinity ? What vast provisions and influences give an overwhelming negative to such a suggestion ! Is the fault with good angels ? Indeed they work not against their own "joy." Do fallen angels impede the gospel, without the concurrence of human volitions ? Surely, then, the hindrance is with mankind, who have the good news, and may, if they will, furnish it to the destitute.

In pre-requisites for sending the gospel, is Christendom more delinquent in one thing than in another ? Is there any particular kind of supply most sought by the general and standard appeals of the aggressive organizations of the church ? If an agent ranges through the land for the Missionary, the Bible, the Tract, or any other cause, what is the want most proclaimed and reiterated ? And, after the labors of the messenger, to what do the councils of the church have necessary reference, for spreading the truths of Christ ? *The supply of money.* Here is the great

omission. Perhaps all others put together should not arouse so much action and depreciation. How often may this be the secret defect where others are lamented? Are prayers of faith, and zealous efforts of mind and body, demanded? Alas! with how many church-members may the suitable consecration, at present or in prospect, of idolized earthly gains be the essential and most difficult consecration preparatory to a high state of piety, and therefore to the believing prayers and zealous exertions belonging to such a state?

And, what if it were the leading object of a travelling Secretary of the Missionary Society to seek men for missions, instead of money? Might not the remedy soon be found in contributions sufficient to break up parental schemes for mammon, which conflict with rearing children for missions; and to provide educational facilities equal to the aspirations of many poor, but pious youths, in whose hearts is a hidden missionary fire?

The demand for money is not peculiar to the enterprise of spreading the Gospel. Look at the whole round of physical, intellectual, and moral enterprises. From the effects produced, review the means used. Do you not find that we are contemplating a general necessity to success? Is it not seen, in the words of one, whose wisdom from above enabled him to take a

full survey, that "Money answereth all things?" (Eccl. x. 19.) There is a philosophical necessity for this. Money, by the common consent of mankind, is the representative, and the controlling agent, of the provisions and means absolutely required to sustain man in existence here.

Money has control of the food to strengthen the hand which constructs the steam-boiler, or draws the magnetic wire, as well as the hand which translates the Word of Life, or prepares the press and the paper for spreading it before dying souls. Must it not, then, be inexcusable folly for members of the church of Christ to question the absolute need of *money, money, and still more, and more money*, as *more and more* work is done for Christ upon earth? Even unregenerate men, with their earth-born zeal, go to the full length of their purses in secular schemes, without pausing to inquire why there is such a ceaseless call for *money, money*. Shall Christian hearts become painfully sensitive under the cry for money to be bestowed largely as possible, as well as systematically (every Lord's Day, if practicable), for the extension of His kingdom, while men of the world, through all the week-days (and some on the Lord's Days), sit, walk, work, or run, in cheerful resignation, under a steady din of *money, money, and never think of great results without!* Oh, Christian reader,

surely you will never dare to complain of hearing much about money, for your Lord's work, when you reflect upon this patience of mere worldlings in quest of their ends. And whence is Zion's money mainly to come, if not from church members?

Shall we rely upon the worldly masses for needful supplies! They have their own aims; and, with few exceptions, have not learned to prize others. Alas! they are not only incited by the calls which you must have for the necessities of this life, but most of them are resolutely and idolatrously in pursuit of much more, for "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life."¹ Christianity must depend principally for money upon Christians. And, in view of its need, it would seem reasonable that God should require, as an essential duty of a Christian life, that they should furnish money, according as he has prospered them; and that those who have but one talent, or but two mites to bestow, should be forbidden to bury, or withhold, as surely as are those who have the most ample amounts. So Inspiration indicates, enjoining the right use of "very little" (Luke xix. 17), and directing to be "faithful in the unrighteous

¹ We have confidence that this statement, in regard to the majority out of the church, will not offend candid unconverted persons. We entreat them to read on, ponder motives, and set noble examples, as have individuals of their class, which may shame some professors of religion.

mammon—in that which is least," as well as in "much." (Luke xvi. 10, 11.) Thus we find the principle is Divinely fixed without reference to the amount possessed. It extends to every cent which can be consistently spared for religious objects.

Now, is it not at once strange and lamentable that this very duty of pecuniary bestowments, which we see lies at the foundation of means for the success of the gospel, as well as of other enterprises, and which is so clearly devolved upon church members, is, by perhaps the great majority of them, considered rather optional than obligatory! Here, alas! is the great secret of the tardy movement of Christianity over the earth. The secret is hid from the willingly blind. May there be no bolt from heaven upon delinquents, except one of gracious power, to start their consciences from deadly apathy!

While the lack of due beneficence is confessed by other respected churches, is it not as lamentably obvious in the Methodist Episcopal denomination? And you believe that this church was raised for a special and momentous mission in these last days. So great minds in other denominations have frankly conceded. This church is evidently as comprehensive and influential as any other, in the most promising territory of the earth. Has not this church a mission? The question is asked with no design to underrate

sister denominations. Each has a great work, and corresponding financial duties.

You have therefore before your mind, not only the overthrow of the idol mammon, but the removal of the most notable hindrance to so momentous a work as the salvation of souls ; and this hindrance existing in a church peculiarly qualified to extend that work. Surely your attention is due.

CHAPTER II.

ENLARGED BENEFICENCE A DUTY.

MANY hearts may shrink from the proper *largeness* of beneficence, as much as from the proper *system*. A penurious spirit needs quite as many motives to urge it over the difficulty of the former, as of the latter. And how important would it be to the resources of Zion, if, under the head of largeness, many persons were induced to surrender *at once* what a past omission of system has allowed unduly to accumulate !

But we are not to lose sight of system. Our full duty is to bestow largely, not only at once, according to over-accumulated means, but largely upon system, from future gains, through life. System can thus

preside over something of needed moment to the church; and beneficence, much liberalized, will more readily submit to be systematized.

The distinctive duty of system shall subsequently have, it is hoped, due illustration and enforcement.

1. *Teachings of Scripture.*

To the Scriptures is our first appeal. They are too weighty to be omitted or delayed for something more novel. With every true believer in the Bible, the first and chief question in regard to any proposed duty, is, and always should be, "What does the word of God say?" Other questions may follow; but motives can have imperative weight only as they rest upon Scripture grounds.

How should we suppose that Divine Revelation would treat the goods of this world, and their representative, money—the sacrificing of which is, as we have seen, an indispensable means to the spread of salvation? Certainly, in a way to draw their possessors to cheerful and liberal contributions. Let us see:—

(1.) *Riches belong to God.* "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts."

(2.) *They are Divinely committed to man, and he*

must render a steward's account. "And thou say in thine heart, my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich." "Both riches and honor come of thee." "If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

(3.) *It is essential to the steward's piety that he make liberal donations for his fellows who suffer merely temporal want.* "Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him." "The righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth." "The righteous considereth the cause of the poor." "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." "Say not unto thy neighbor, Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee." "He that honoreth his Maker hath mercy on the poor." "Give to him that needeth." "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

In view of such directions to temporal aid, how evidently is beneficence obligatory, when demanded by spiritual destitution!

(4.) *Blessings for time and eternity encourage to faithful beneficence.* "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack." "Trust in the Lord and do good;

so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed." "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day, and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." "Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest." "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

(5.) *Riches retained, can secure no real advantage to the unfaithful steward, but must put him in great jeopardy.* "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase." "Then I looked upon all the works that

my hands had wrought, and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." "For what hath man of all his labor and of the vexation of his heart wherein he hath labored under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night." "The abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep." "Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away." "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing." "In the revenues of the wicked is trouble." "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house." "Riches profit not in the day of wrath." "There is a sore evil, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." "Their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord." "He that hideth his eyes from the poor shall have many a curse." "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field." "The care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word." "The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." "Covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints." "Be not deceived; nor thieves, nor covetous, shall inherit the kingdom of God." "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

2. *Impressive examples.*

In darker dispensations the people were drawn to a liberal imparting of worldly goods, as if by example

to prepare the way for the pecuniary sacrifices needful for the final triumph of Christianity. Enlarged, as well as systematic, outlays were essential to the maintenance of the shadows; shall we not act nobly for the substance?

(1.) *In the Patriarchal dispensation, the ceremonies of religion cost something.* Neither Cain nor Abel kept all he acquired. (Gen. iv. 3, 4.) Abram submitted to expenditure. (Gen. xiv. 20.) There was expense in Job's time. (Job xxxi. 16, 20, and xlvi. 8.) Jacob consecrated a share of all. (Gen. xxviii. 22.)

(2.) *The Mosaic dispensation suggests to us no stinted beneficence.* It should not be objected that, when so many types and shadows were to be supported, expenditure was more demanded than in the Christian dispensation, unless it can be proved that types are more deserving than antitypes and substances; for we see that these last do not prevail upon earth, but in connection with monetary sacrifices. Must it not, then, be a singularly ungrateful return to God, if, because he has granted us a dispensation of more light and liberty, of more room to act cheerfully from the heart, without minute requisitions, we so shamefully abuse our liberty as to fall short even of Mosaic beneficence?

What does the darker dispensation present as a rebuke to covetous stewards for Christ? "It seemed designed to set God's mark on the most common articles of property; so that, while employed in his fields, and with his flocks, and in gathering his harvests, each one should be constantly reminded of God's claims, and of his own obligation and dependence. In the first place, each one was required to give the first fruits, both of his flocks and of his field. The first fruits of the harvest were, by custom, the sixtieth part of the whole. Then money was to be paid as the ransom of the first-born male child. Then, in reaping, the corners of the field were to be left for the poor; here, also, custom defined the requirement to be a sixtieth part of the whole. Then whatever fell from the reaper's hand belonged to the poor. Then every seventh year all the fields were to be left untilled, to produce spontaneously for the poor. Then a tenth part of all the products of the field was to be given to the Levites. Then there were trespass-offerings, sin-offerings, and specified portions of most of all the sacrificed animals, devoted to the priesthood and Levites. Then every seventh year all debts were to be remitted. And the three yearly journeys to Jerusalem, which were required of all the males, at the festivals, must have been no small tax. Added to these were the half-shekels for the sanctuary, and

abundant hospitalities and gifts for the poor. So that a conscientious Hebrew could hardly have spent less than one-third of his income in religious and charitable gifts.”¹

And it should be remembered that there was not only a steady current of liberal outlays, but that there were at once cheerful and very large contributions as for the tabernacle and temple, on occasions less important than the one in our generation. We enjoy the peculiar privilege of pointing all nations to a spiritual tabernacle, to a more glorious temple of the Lord. Let us be provoked by the appropriations to the Jewish tabernacle and temple. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering; of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, shall ye take my offering.”

“The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman whose heart made them willing to bring, for all manner of work which the Lord had commanded.” (Ex. xxxv. 29.) “And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning—and all the wise men that wrought, spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough. So the people were restrained from bringing.” (Ex. xxxvi. 3, 7.)

¹ “The Divine Law of Beneficence,” by Rev. P. Cooke; pp. 15, 16.

In regard to the gifts in the precious metals on this occasion, Mr. Bagster, on Ex. xxxviii. 24, says, "If we follow the estimation of the learned Dean Prideaux, the value of the twenty-nine talents and 730 shekels of gold will be \$880,663.45. The value of the silver contributed by 603,550 Israelites, at half a shekel per man, will amount to \$200,982.24. The value of the 70 talents, 2400 shekels of brass, will be \$2281.48. Total value, \$1,083,927.17.

Mark the cheerful manner and wonderful amount of donations for the temple! "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy—and said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel, our father for ever and ever. Both riches and honor come of thee. Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." (1 Chron. xxix. 9, 14.) The value of the gold and silver furnished on this occasion, according to calculations which may be examined by the incredulous at the close of Dr. A. Clarke's comments on 2 Chron. ix., is, in British currency, 1,223,629,343 pounds, 11 shillings and $8\frac{1}{2}$ pence. Let the reader contrast this amount with the present contributions of the church.

(3.) *Look to the early Christian Church.* It was

filled with the Holy Ghost. Correct examples were set. The Great Teacher had not been silent in regard to earthly goods. He had said, "Give to him that asketh thee." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not." The first Christians did not interpret such teachings too loosely, nor give merely an intellectual assent. They "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." (Acts ii. 45.) And with the primitive Christians there was more than a temporary action under pentecostal influences. Some time after, St. Paul, in an epistle to the Romans, said, "Now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints, for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." (Rom. xv. 26.) And, subsequently, in an epistle to the Corinthians, the same apostle set forth the Macedonian liberality as an incitement. "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves; praying us with much entreaty that

we would receive the gift." (2 Cor. viii. 1, 4.) How does this contrast with some modern customs in the church! Observe, there was no declining because they were not wealthy. They drew no excuse from "deep poverty." They were not so fearful of giving "beyond their power" as to be sure not to give up *to* it. There was no grudging; "they were willing." They did not wait to be urged by others; "they were willing of themselves." Much less did they wait to be urged with great entreaty, before rendering the gift. They prayed, says the apostle, "*with much entreaty that we would receive the gift.*"

Awhile after the apostolic days, not only did Christians take "joyfully the spoiling of" their "goods," in times of persecution; but they held fasts, and devoted to beneficence what they saved in food. Some wealthy converts sold all their possessions, or held them as much at the service of the poor as of themselves.¹ There were even instances of the poor selling themselves into bondage to free others.²

Why should not the inspired teachings respecting worldly goods be acted upon to the end of time? If their force can be restricted to particular times and places, cannot that of any other Scripture precept? Are any based upon more general principles?

¹ Cave's "Primitive Christianity," p. 292.

² Clement's Epist. ad Cor. c. 55.

(4.) In modern days, among the few instances of a return to the primitive standard of giving, behold the course of a special instrument of God. That the case may not seem overstated by denominational partiality, take a quotation from a writer in a sister church: "Early in life, John Wesley said that he had known but four men whose piety had not suffered from their becoming rich. Longer observation led him to make no exception. His own case, however, may be alleged as an example of the power of grace to withstand the withering influence of increasing wealth. His income at first was thirty pounds a year. Of this he reserved two pounds for charity. The next year it was sixty pounds. Still using but twenty-eight for himself, he employed thirty-two pounds in charity. And when his income amounted to a hundred and twenty pounds, he lent ninety-two pounds to the Lord, and lived himself on twenty-eight, as at first. At his decease, his whole property was found to consist of his clothes, his books, and a carriage, although he had probably given away more than a hundred thousand dollars. Did the root of all evil find no more congenial soil in the hearts of other men than it did in that of John Wesley, how different would be the state of the world!"¹

¹ "The Mission of the Church; or Systematic Beneficence, by Rev. E. A. Lawrence," pp. 77, 78.

Would it not be reasonable to suppose—if God were to raise up a man to be specially instrumental in giving the work of salvation an impetus over the earth; to be his instrument in the origination of a branch of the church designed to occupy no secondary place in adaptation to the world's wants—that such a man would set the right example in the momentous duty of beneficence? This John Wesley did.

There have been other exemplars in modern times—some stars of various magnitudes seen in dark heavens—such as Hale, Boyle, Tillotson, Hammond, Annesley, Watts, Doddridge, Baxter, Mrs. Rowe, the Countess of Huntingdon, Budgett, Cobb, Smith, Frey, Mrs. Garrett. Some of these will receive further attention, when we come to the more direct inculcation of system in beneficence.

3. Your consecration to God at conversion, and your subsequent religious experience, suggest the duty of enlarged beneficence.

When first blessed, had you not just given yourself, and in spirit your all, to Him? This was a necessary condition. Can you expect to retain spiritual healthfulness if now you practically refuse to hold your earthly goods at the Divine disposal? Remember your frame of heart since, in seasons of special baptism from above. While the light of the Spirit was shining in you, and showing you the condition of the

world around you, and also something of what heaven is, then money lost its charm. Could you have been approached just then with the urgent claims of a suffering cause—one clearly belonging to God—you would have apprehended the true standard for giving. The Holy Ghost would have guided you. He is ready to come again. Be entreated to look for another baptism; and, when it is upon you, to act at once, before grieving the Spirit, and losing both the light and the inclination for due largeness in giving.

CHAPTER III.

ENLARGED BENEFICENCE SUGGESTED BY REAL NEED.

1. *The Church, in the prosecution of her holy enterprises, may be more needy than your family.*

Beware of retrenchment in beneficence, from a prevalent “prudent” forecast in regard to temporal wants. The sensitive circumspection, the lynx-eye here, may have too much of an earthly direction. Temporal forecast is lawful to a certain extent. But is the great danger that of its falling short? or going too far? We can see at once by observing which of two things is the more common—for families to pass from this life having possessed temporal goods

beyond real need, or for enterprises of our beloved Zion to be begging and lean, from stinted allowances ? Here is a question for heads of families who would be *prudent* for eternal, as well as temporal interests. It is a question fully solved by the great Head of the Church.

2. Religious donations can secure far better results than the retention of wealth for heirs.

As to laying up “well” for those you love, with merely temporal ends in view, can God approve, while a good share of the accumulations, without any one’s being left to suffer, might be sent forth in streams of holy influence upon the spiritual and eternal destinies of your fellow-beings ? Keep in view that, from your beneficence, there would arise no impediment to the spiritual comforts, or to the *eternal* safety of your loved ones. You cannot say, as in God’s presence, that your family will derive spiritual prosperity or safety from supplies or bequests of the goods of this world. But your impartial judgment leaves you in no doubt that money disbursed through the financial channels of the church can, and does, secure precious blessings to immortal souls. Therefore, two things before you are set against each other, between which you *must* choose, for hesitancy is leaving things to continue in the wrong course : *the temporal good of your family or heirs ; and the influences for good upon*

the eternal destinies of souls. How much does the one exceed the other! How far will eternity surpass a lifetime on earth! How much will heavenly joys excel a satisfaction in possession of uncertain riches!

Satan may suggest the possibility of your heirs bestowing liberally, from what you may leave. But your good sense cannot allow this *possibility* as a set-off to your giving *certainly*; and to your giving *sooner* than can your heirs, and thus securing far greater final results, since the enterprises of Zion are so peculiarly cumulative—the crop of each year being seed for the next. Surely, you would not have the gospel field shamefully defrauded by waiting for heirs to sow for you, even if you could know that, after your decease, there would be no danger of the seed being wasted or locked up.

Dread not any upbraiding from your heirs. Even should they at first speak a little harshly in haste, they will not, upon candid reflection, respect you the less for your aiming to glorify God, without really injuring them. Indeed, may we not believe that they will have the nobleness to rejoice on earth (as they certainly may in heaven, upon meeting souls saved through your liberality) in the substitution of the eternal bliss and glories of others for their own questionable eclat and gratification, arising from the pos-

session of more money for an hour upon the stage of mortality?

If you leave *all* to your heirs, death will soon separate them from it. Then, rest assured, as they arrive at eternal conclusions, they will not think the more highly of you.

We would not have endured the cross of thus pressing this point, were it not for a notable evil, prevalent as it is delicate, and often passed over or too lightly touched.

In order that you may offer to God more largely, will you not submit to some settled habits of self-denial for yourself and family, in diet, or apparel, or something else? To what did the Saviour submit for others! for you! What privations have many of his followers endured for others! for you! How much beyond what is now suggested as your duty! Each reader is entreated to consider, patiently and candidly, this proposal of self-denial. A way is open for the poor to give something, and for the wealthy to bestow more munificently than they otherwise could. How trifling would be the pains of self-denial for a family, even in a lifetime, compared with the pains of one soul in hell for ever! But *many* might be saved. And the self-denial might remove from the household impediments in the way to heaven. It might remove little, but busy and fashionable,

agents for “the lust of the flesh,” “the lust of the eye,” or “the pride of life,” which drive away “the love of the Father.” (1 John ii. 15, 16.)

Let us here ponder some remarks of Mr. Wesley, taken from his sermon on the use of money:—

“Having gained all you can, by honest wisdom, and unwearied diligence, the second rule of Christian prudence is, ‘Save all you can.’ Do not throw the precious talent into the sea; leave that folly to heathen philosophers. Do not throw it away in idle expénses, which is just the same as throwing it into the sea. Expend no part of it merely to gratify the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life.

“Do not waste any part of so precious a talent merely in gratifying the desires of the flesh; in procuring the pleasures of sense of whatever kind; particularly in enlarging the pleasure of tasting. I do not mean, avoid gluttony and drunkenness only: an honest heathen would condemn these. But there is a regular, reputable kind of sensuality, an elegant epicurism, which does not immediately disorder the stomach, nor (sensibly at least) impair the understanding; and yet (to mention no other effects of it now) it cannot be maintained without considerable expense. Cut off all this expense! Despise delicacy and variety, and be content with what plain nature requires.

“Do not waste any part of so precious a talent

merely in gratifying the desire of the eye, by superfluous or expensive apparel, or by needless ornaments. Waste no part of it in curiously adorning your houses; in superfluous or expensive furniture; in costly pictures, painting, gilding, books; in elegant rather than useful gardens. Let your neighbors, who know nothing better, do this: ‘Let the dead bury their dead.’ But ‘what is that to thee?’ says our Lord: ‘follow thou me.’ Are you willing? Then you are able so to do.

“Lay out nothing to gratify the pride of life, to gain the admiration or praise of men. This motive of expense is frequently interwoven with one or both of the former. Men are expensive in diet, or apparel, or furniture, not barely to please their appetite, or to gratify their eye, or their imagination, but their vanity too. ‘So long as thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee.’ So long as thou art clothed ‘in purple and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day,’ no doubt many will applaud thy elegance of taste, thy generosity and hospitality. But do not buy their applause so dear. Rather be content with the honor that cometh from God.

“Who would expend anything in gratifying these desires, if he considered that to gratify them is to increase them? Nothing can be more certain than this: daily experience shows, the more they are indulged, they increase the more. Whenever, therefore,

you expend anything to please your taste, or other senses, you pay so much for sensuality. When you lay out money to please your eye, you give so much for an increase of curiosity—for a stronger attachment to those pleasures which perish in the using. While you are purchasing anything which men use to applaud, you are purchasing more vanity. Had you not, then, enough of vanity, sensuality, curiosity, before? Was there need of any addition? And would you pay for it, too? What manner of wisdom is this? Would not the literally throwing your money into the sea be a less mischievous folly?

“And why should you throw away money upon your children, any more than upon yourself, in delicate food, in gay or costly apparel, in superfluities of any kind? Why should you purchase for them more pride or lust, more vanity, or foolish and hurtful desires? They do not want any more; they have enough already; nature has made ample provision for them; why should you be at further expense to increase their temptations and snares, and to pierce them through with many sorrows?”¹

If you pray for Divine influence upon your family, and fully and lovingly explain to them the great reasons for saving by self-denial, you may expect them to submit cheerfully; or, at the worst, to treat

¹ Wesley’s Works, vol. i. p. 445.

you with a disfavor far more durable than that of your Maker. These are plain words ; yet can they offend your better judgment ?

3. The condition of half or more of the world, under Paganism, is enough to rouse your sympathies to all possible liberality.

"Bereft of the idea of one all perfect and controlling Divinity ; with no standard of truth and right—no guiding demontsration, leading to a comparison of the false with the true, the malignant with the good —the appetites and passions rising into supremacy and converting the enfeebled remains of moral sense into auxiliaries of debasement, what can Paganism be but one 'mighty labor of human depravity to confirm its dominion ?' Vedas and Shasters, filled with interminable genealogies, and transmigrations of the human soul, and of male and female divinities, are its holy books, containing neither precept nor example of moral excellence. Brahma, Vishnoo, and Siva, the consecrated patrons of the vices, are its chief deities. Vain theorists, skilful impostors, and lascivious sorcerers, are its only guides and intercessors. Paricide, infanticide, sutteeism, self-torture, laborious pilgrimages, and obscene rites, are its most approved forms of religious service. Caste, with its impassable walls, fixing unalterably the station of each individual, annihilates all motive to improvement

in the lower classes, and gives to the higher free course in vice and crime, by securing them against deposition or disgrace. ‘The entire empire of polytheism,’ says Harris, ‘is a realm of diabolical dominion. It assembles its votaries only to blaspheme the name of God; erects its temples only to attract the lightning of the impending cloud on their devoted heads; calls them around its altars, only that, in the very act of supposed atonement, they may complete their guilt; and gives them a pretended revelation, only that ‘they should believe a lie.’ And the worst feature of all is, that in the systems of Paganism there is no element of improvement, no principle of progress, except in the road from bad to worse. Time only deepens the gloom, and legitimizes among them the processes of ruin. Even the moral sentiments, that here and there shone out of ancient heathenism, like stars in deep night, and the skill and taste apparent in the temples and divinities of Greece and Rome, find no place in modern Paganism. It has no recuperative, but only a degrading and destructive power. And does no Macedonian cry, coming up from such an Aceldama, make its appeal to Christian hearts for some more vigorous and sustained beneficent effort? Behold poor, abused, bleeding Africa, pillaged and plundered by lawless and inhuman marauders, yielding up her tawny, barbarous

sons to still more barbarous strangers from Christian lands. See Asia, ‘wholly given to idolatry,’ her miserable poor crushed under the heel of an oppressive and polluted priesthood; Asia, the cradle of the race, torn by intestine feuds and foreign aggressions, pouring her dense population of wretched and guilty spirits into the abyss of woe; Asia, with no Bible, and no Sabbath; with no Saviour but the Ganges and her countless idols; with no worship but that of demons and reptiles, or monsters of vice; and with no morality except what hastens the desolating work, and hurries human souls to perdition—how does she lift up her imploring voice, and call on us for a deliverer!

‘Oh, could I picture out the *full* effect
 Of that soul-withering power, Idolatry,
 I’d write a page which, whoso dared to read,
 His eye, instead of tears, in crimson drops should bleed.’¹

For fellow-beings, in such a state, can we esteem any sacrifices too great which will still leave us with both the necessaries of this life, and the *riches of gospel grace*?

4. Consider the condition of the major part of the rest of mankind, infatuated by false systems, which have interposed between Paganism and vital Christianity.

¹ “The Mission of the Church,” &c., pp. 29, 31.

Satan has arrayed under various banners of heterodoxy, of perversion of truth, and of carnal license, the masses of unbelieving, apostate, or hypocritical men, not known as Pagans. They have been marshalled by satanic skill into Mohammedan, Papal, Mormon, or other ranks. Their dogmas and forms acknowledge just enough of the true God, enough of Christ, enough of truth, to quiet the misgivings of their deluded adherents, and to be, to the view of Pagans, more or less confounded with real Christianity, and therefore a greater occasion of perplexity to such of them as inquire after the truth.

And fiendish skill seems to have interposed every shade of error for Protestant, as well as other lands, from twilight to starless midnight. In many instances, strong though misguided intellects are groping in submission to priestly authority, human tradition, or their own reason. Will you not give money freely for domestic as well as foreign missions, to reach souls dying under these ruinous systems? At the same time, you will be instrumentally changing these souls from opposers to the spread of vital religion, to acute and mighty helpers in reaching the miserable heathen.

CHAPTER IV.

ENLARGED BENEFICENCE SUGGESTED BY THE WORTHINESS OF CHURCH ENTERPRISES, AND THE WORTHLESSNESS OF MONEY IN ITSELF.

1. *The worthiness of church enterprises.*

Our liberality cannot exceed the church's ability to use money to advantage. What department of exertion is in danger of financial repletion? If such a one could be found, some of the others might receive the surplus, and still have need of a thousandfold more. What glorious evidence would rapidly be given of the church's capacity for enlargement, if all her sons and daughters would, at once, render all the pecuniary aid in their power! And what large amounts must be given before she will have accomplished what is possible to be done for the descendants of Adam on this globe! While a comparatively small number are reached, are we at the point for pausing?

(1.) *The Missionary department* in the church of your choice, for both foreign and domestic aggression, is indeed fully justified to your mind by the state of the unchristianized masses noticed in the last chapter, and by your belief, without disrespect to other denominations, that this church is not secondary to any inability to inculcate truth.

(2.) *The Bible cause*, of course, rests on the same ground of worthiness as the Missionary. We believe that, fully to possess the gospel, people not only *may*, but *must*, possess and read the Bible.

(3.) *The Tract Society*. If money be furnished to carry out its plans, none can doubt that saving light will be darted into many souls which are inaccessible by other means. And it should be remembered that this society contemplates a great subserviency to the Missionary cause, in timely issues of books in various languages. But there is a great mission inside of the church and her congregations in our own land. Formerly a minister here had less minute pastoral care, less imperative demand for study; and he could better succeed as both preacher and colporteur. Now, with only two eyes, two hands, and the ability to go in but one direction at a time, he can do well only as preacher and pastor. Hence, the tract enterprise, with its provision for diligent colporteurs, must have free course, or a lamentable defect will exist. Shall the church, as well as the multitudes under her influence, be seriously, if not fatally, injured from "lack of knowledge?"

To remain firm in herself, and progressive in her achievements, there must be, in these times of restless taste for reading, steady instruction from books suited to her high spiritual characteristics.

We live in times of novel, and exciting, and systematic movements of Satan ; of unsanctified science ; of imposture pandering to the love of the marvellous ; and of monthly, weekly, and daily (including even Sabbath) issues of many an avaricious and corrupt press. And we live in times, not only of the probability, but of the fact of the relaxation of religious strictness, and the adjustment of religious standards, for theory and practice, to sickly moral tastes. In such times the tract enterprise, in its new efficiency, rises to the view, as truly deserving of much money, as the increased financial resources of these same times significantly suggest the bestowment of it.

(4.) *The Sunday School system.* The mighty tendency of this for eternal good can be doubted by no one acquainted with its present healthfulness and increasing influence. If the cramping hand of avarice should retard its growth, and finally render it inefficient, where, in a few years, will be the prosperous church ? Where, without a transfer to heathen grounds ? But, with avarice so active as to underrate Sunday Schools, we could hope for no such transfer. Then, let us watch the nursery of Zion's future. Children will be trained up in some way. Let us be awake ; and in as easy a sacrifice as that of money, open wide one hand, while with the other we lead

children to Sunday School, and open the book of instruction.

(5.) *Church-building, and the payment of church-debts,* deserve hearty and enlarged beneficence. Money, in this field, is the only thing needed to prevent, at some points, lamentable restriction, if not extinction, of influence. And how much do church-debts, in some congregations, conflict with the financial claims of various church enterprises! How they furnish real or pretended excuses for small donations, or for none! And how some societies creep along, almost crushed by opposing influences, simply from the want of a suitable house for worship, or of one to which absentees can resort without hearing again and again of the old debt!

(6.) *The educational department* should not be overlooked. In the very rise of Methodism, scholastic attainments were divinely honored in the selection of its founder. From this we may infer the propriety of a liberal education in spreading gospel truth, even in our own language. And so surely as there is now no supernatural gift of tongues in the church, the common sense of every man must acknowledge the necessity of learned men, as missionaries, to translate the Scriptures from the original into heathen languages, and to meet the scientific queries and objections of infidels and pagans. Would, then, no obstacle arise

to the work of spreading scriptural holiness among the nations, if short-sighted and penurious prejudices against raising up learned men should remove the present, or prevent the creation of still needed educational privileges in the church of your choice? Would it be as well, if other churches alone should furnish competent missionaries? And would it be as well, if, only under the influence of other denominations, universities, colleges, and seminaries, should be endowed so as to present inviting aspects to wealthy students, and charitable aspects to the indigent? From the indigent, not less surely than from the wealthy, there has been and there may be a Divine selection of efficient men for the church.

(7.) *The obligation to contribute to the support of the ministry,* is generally acknowledged. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 14.) He whose head and heart have the care of souls would certainly find as much to interfere with his calling, in the perplexity of temporal want, or in an additional business through the week, as would the physician, lawyer, or public instructor, in his profession.

Under this head may be urged the duty of *supporting disabled ministers, and the widows and orphans of the departed.* This support is needful to secure cheerful and unperplexed service of men now in the

gospel work. The laborers must be depressed or pressed out of service, if obliged to apprehend, from neglect of the already disabled or bereaved, the danger of future want for themselves, or surviving loved ones. And such support is necessary to the honor and saving influence of the church with the world. Even the world will love its own.

(8.) *Relief of church members in temporal want* must work with equal certainty for the honor and right influence of Christianity. And if sufficiently practised, some members might be inclined to maintain a closer fellowship and a more cordial co-operation with the church: there might be less expenditure of their time, ardor, and money, in certain societies which promise temporal aid.

There may be discerned in each department we have noticed—as doubtless in any other which may hereafter be instituted in the wisdom of the church—a real connection with the other springs of life-giving action upon perishing souls. Aid to one may increase the movements of others. Wheels join wheels in the ecclesiastical enginery. Yet there may be an intelligent distribution of pecuniary aid. Some wheels are larger, and need more than others.

2. *The worthlessness of money in itself.*

(1.) Money in itself, unintelligent, inanimate, is, indeed, what a spirit cannot commune with, or feed

upon. Except a mere miser—who is so far insane as not to realize that it is only dead matter—no one is charmed by wealth, but as it is seen, like the rainbow, in the distance. When the supposed point of termination is attained, cold mist surrounds the pursuer; and if any bright colors remain, they are still in advance: “A larger amount of money—another chase for gains to be hoarded,” whispers Mammon, or rather Satan, who has, by this time, if not before, fully added his influence.

(2.) To some persons, wealth has peculiar attractiveness in its power to draw the smiles of their fellows. But observe, there can be no enjoyment from these smiles, except as there is confidence that they come from the heart. And though an affluent man may have sincere friends, yet, instead of wealth’s securing more happiness in friendship, it has just the contrary tendency. In attaining or retaining riches, a man learns much of human nature, and his shrewd heart often fails to reciprocate bows and expressions of regard. There is a chilling uncertainty as to the state of surrounding hearts. There are painful suspicions of some self-interest lurking under bland approaches to him, a man of wealth and influence. The poor man is better off. He may rest with confidence in the sincerity of a narrow circle of smiling friends, while the rich man may range a wide circle

in painful suspense. This view regards the mere possession of wealth. A man, it is true, may control much of this world's goods, as a faithful steward, and enjoy sweet confidence in many smiling friends. But it is his moral worth, with the right use of his means, which inspires the true esteem; and the beams of that esteem fall more freely and warmly upon his heart, as he narrows his means by wide beneficence.

(3.) Wealth can exert a subtle and baneful charm upon its hoarding possessor, by insinuating the idea that it may secure the pleasures of enlarged charity, some time *in the future*, when swelled to a large extent. Satan's snare here is to keep the business man from *giving*, until intellectual and moral habits of *grasping* are formed and confirmed. The snare is laid under pretence of future satisfaction in loosening the hold and scattering the more for having grasped so much. "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." (Prov. i. 17.) Will a man be less cautious than a bird? How plain is it that, so far from the hoarding of wealth facilitating the exercise of charity, or preparing for pleasure therein, it does not even allow its possessor an undiminished zest for giving, *according to his ability*. It is the general law, that the *more* money men get, the *less* are they inclined to give, *according to their increase of means*. Many a man who, when saving but a few dollars

annually, has cheerfully contributed one-fourth of his gains, is pained, when he has attained to a large income, at the thought of bestowing in the same proportion; although three-fourths, now kept for himself, would so abundantly exceed what once satisfied him. Aggravated reluctance to be duly liberal must ensue, if no habit of giving accompany the habit of grasping. We may expect no relaxation of the hold before death. Nay, death cannot touch the soul. And, strange as it may seem, even at death, in a hallucination analogous to that of the warrior who meets the sword that he may live in fame, the victim of covetousness feels as if he could remain upon earth in the persons of his heirs; and instead of willing largely to Christ's causes, he leaves most or all of the possessions to his family. Therefore, "take heed, and beware of covetousness," under the plea of *future* practice and pleasure in beneficence. Give what you can as soon as possible, lest the money you lay up, if not your precious soul, be ultimately found out of Christ's kingdom.

(4.) Riches and their possessor must inevitably part. If *they* do not "fly away" from him, he must from them. Life here "is soon cut off, and we fly away." (Ps. xc. 10.) Then is it not wise, *voluntarily* to surrender a liberal *share* previous to the time of *inevitable* separation from the *whole*; and see that

share, before old age or death, productive of eternal blessings? If you delay even a little, you may hardly find time to "make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness."

CHAPTER V.

ENLARGED BENEFICENCE DEMANDED BY GRATITUDE AND SPIRITUAL PRUDENCE.

1. Consider what God has given for your benefit, and is disposed to give you hereafter.

(1.) Temporal treasures are from Him. Your own labor cannot prevent them from being gifts. "For it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." (Deut. viii. 18.) And are you not worth the more in consequence of your connection with Christianity? What some say the church has *cost* them is perhaps not a tithe of what it has *saved* to them in the goods of this world. No Christian can tell from what gross sins of great pecuniary cost the gospel may have saved him: sins which would have reduced him to miserable want in a shortened earthly stay, as well as have sunk him to horrible want in eternity.

(2.) *But let us contemplate spiritual things, and an unspeakable gift.* If your Lord's causes in the

present age cry to you "Give, give," and try your patience by their importunity, while you feel nearly or quite disposed to a half-echoing objection, "Give, give, is always the cry;" if this is so, do not forget that your miserable condition in fallen humanity appealed most piteously unto God, with all the emphasis of "give, give." And do not forget that God listened in amazing love and patience, and condescended to a sacrifice; not indeed in a steward's return of earthly goods, but in a free gift of something transcendently higher in value and exclusively His own. He thus listened, and attached to you a saving chain, traceable back from him who was the direct instrument of your conversion, with many a link of pecuniary and other sacrifices, made by many a preacher and layman of noble deeds and missionary zeal in former ages of the church; a chain with no untried link, through lonely wastes of banishment, deep waters, dark dungeons, deriding and malicious crowds, smitten by sharpened steel, passing through boiling caldrons, melted metals, and blazing piles of fagots, till, in amazingly agonizing exertions of a wonderful Being, with the sweating of blood and more than the sound of an earthquake, even the cry of "*Eloi, eloi, lama sabacthani,*" it was carried up to an acceptance at the throne of inflexible, yet propitiated justice, and fastened to a Divine purpose of grace;

a pillar of the diameter of the world and the height of the third heaven. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here was a *gift*. Here was *cost* for our sake. Inspiration has presented it to us as a motive to "liberality" in the goods of this world: "See that ye abound in this grace also; for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 7, 9.)

(3.) *But God is ready to do more for you.* Indeed, He has commenced doing it. Yet it is all in consequence of the great former gift. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Among these let us proceed to contemplate the greatest.

We tell the weeping penitent to say from the heart,

"Here, Lord, I give myself away;
'Tis all that I can do."

We acknowledge this enough for him. Can we not then be satisfied with what the Deity is doing, and is inclined to do for ever, when he vouchsafes HIMSELF to us? "The *Portion* of Jacob." "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be *his God*."

He condescends!—how should we dare to think it, had he not in substance said it?—*He condescends to give HIMSELF: IT IS ALL THAT HE CAN DO.* He will dwell in you, and you may dwell in him for ever. Were he to set before you, as a portion, the whole range of his created universe, your progressive soul would arrive at a point beyond which there would be nothing new to attain. Your restless and undying aspirations would finally be mocked by a limit, and you find yourself for ever unsatisfied, and therefore unhappy. But, blessed be God, he has opened to you Himself. You may say, “*He is the Portion of my soul.*”

And observe that in all creation there can be nothing but what has come into existence under the fiat of God, without having had any germ extraneous to himself. If, therefore, you possess God, you have the fathomless and unfailing fountain of all that is curious, beautiful, sublime, or in any possible sense desirable. And, if the most transcendent created imagination in heaven should take the utmost flight for ravishing pictures, there would be in the Deity, not only resources for making the whole range real at a word, but an infinite surplus of inherent resources and capabilities. The most extended views of any creature, yea, of all creatures in the aggregate, would take in less than a little spray from the great Ocean.

And God, as the source of the faculty of imagination, is indeed more than the sun which can impart brilliancy to the spray. He is ever truly, as the ocean appears to the eye, boundless; and ever truly, as the sun appears, too exuberant in light to be limited. If you possess God for ever, your spirit shall indeed never find a shore to its bliss—never find a limit to enrapturing search.

From such a portion can you descend so low as even to the *whole of creation?* Can you descend still lower, to any one department in the whole range? Can you descend so low as to the department of *matter!* So low as to *one* earth in this department! So *low, so very low,* as to one little heap of this earth—*mere money*—and hold it with idolatrous grasp? What folly can be so astounding! Look up to the true God, or down to the idol, what an extreme of infatuation and guilt appears!

2. *Give money largely for the safety of your own soul.*

Be not grieved by plain words. These pages have in view a most terrible delinquency. They must speak of the sword. If any one shrink from hearing of the sword, how will he shudder to feel it! Yet, precious reader, we are speaking in a love which would not cry danger merely to terrify, though it cannot consent to cry peace to ruin. Will you not also,

in love to your soul, deal faithfully with it? Then let your heart in strict candor decide whether you can continue to "have salt in yourself," while you refuse to act as salt to your fellow men in a service most urgently demanded by the church, and by Providence, and by the Spirit presiding in both. And may you not find in eternity that God, in great wisdom, devolved upon you the duty of pecuniary appropriations to his cause, for *your own safety*, as well as that of others? Has he not required you to be salt to others in a way best preservative of salt in yourself? Something else might have been the most essential offering, had the surrender of it been as advantageous for the Christian himself. If the idolatry of Christendom naturally centres in money—which has aptly been called "condensed world," on account of its procuring power on the enticing things of the world—may not God tie you up here to conquer or be conquered? With many men, doubtless, the opposing claims to the Divine may be reduced to those of such "condensed world," and the ultimately decisive choice of probation be simply between "God and mammon."

Does not the sensitiveness of some professors of religion, under church-calls for money, indicate that their affections are set upon the idol? If a vine bend and tremble with the jostling of a trellis-work, is it

not because the tendrils cling to it? Why, to so many persons, are "good sermons spoiled by money matters?" If in other things the preacher inculcate and enforce with warmth, and pungently urge to much increase of effort, it is "all very well—appropriate work of the gospel ministry." Why, then, the emotions of pain when faithfulness in the use of the unrighteous mammon is inculcated? The medical man finds the diseased part when the patient shrinks. Where, then, is *the* disease of the church at the present day? Is there no danger of death to one who refuses to let a cure commence with himself at this point? If the sensitiveness is equal to that of the eye, there should be the more alarm. "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire."

3. *Give money largely, in view of the comparative value of the soul.*

"For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26.)

The soul may be lost. Let us contemplate its worth, while tracing its wonderful faculties, as they will operate in heaven or hell.

Think how much greater the sweep of the *imagination* will be than in its widest excursions while on

earth ! What joys in heaven, or what agonies in hell, must result from its flights, when it will bear upon its wings the new colors or materials for intense thought, gathered from death and from the judgment-fires !

Think of the faculty of the *judgment* in eternity, not as it will distinguish between lands or goods to be priced by gold, but as it will hold, in one scale, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and, in the other, "the pleasures of sin for a season;" or as it will hold in one scale the burden of the damned, and in the other the daily religious crosses (amidst greater sweets), in a life-long way of escape.

Think of the *memory*, which can never really lose aught once presented to the mind—which, to one who may say to-day he does not recollect a circumstance, may to-morrow exhibit it clearly, proving that the fact was not really out of the mind. Think of this memory in the saved soul, freed from causes of forgetfulness, as, far on in eternal life, it will present for contemplation struggles against the love of money and other sins, kept up through a rightly improved probation, followed in contrast by the joys of heavenly rest; or, think of this memory in the lost soul, as it will ever present a temporary excitement in chase for illusive phantoms of wealth, or something else, in an abused probation, followed in contrast by ages of darkest gloom, which will have rolled along for horrible

retrospection. Think of the memory, thus presenting a past and ever-lengthening vista from heaven or hell—a retrospection ever extended from the more and more advanced points of immediate consciousness in boundless eternity, away back to the first dawn of probation under an earthly father's roof! What a state of existence in which the soul is ever to be unfolding, as it were—how more and more transcending all earthly conceptions—not unrolling a blank, but a scroll written all over with characters of intense thought, ever extending, ever waving, ever glaring, in the light of God's countenance, or the fires of hell. This is the soul, in *one* of its faculties.

How does your soul compare with gold in its nature? its powers? its value? If you overlook the value of others, which your money can instrumentally save, surely you cannot find it hard to give money largely for the safety of your own soul! *If you will be selfish, be selfish for your soul, not for gold.*

Forget not that the soul, with all its powers, can have communion with God. It cannot only "feel after God," but "find him." (Acts xvii. 27.) There may be an indwelling of Him, a dwelling in Him, (1 John iv. 15,) a fellowship with Him, (1 John i. 3,) yea, oneness with Him. (John xvii. 21.) Here is indeed an elevation above perception, through nerves in the human body, as when the finger's end is upon money.

And the soul cannot only enjoy God *for ever*, but *increasingly* for ever. The more that is known of a charming object, the more it is loved. And the more the faculties are exercised upon any unexhausted source of growth, there is not merely a steady acquisition, but an *increased rate* of acquisition. This arises from the greater facility obtained by exercise of the powers. An object gaining bulk in successive revolutions must, at each turn, acquire a greater surface for accumulation in the next. There is growth for the soul indeed beyond the accumulation of gold in earthly coffers—beyond “making money pay well,” in the language of covetousness.

As you contrast gold with the soul, are you at any loss to decide for which the hand of safe-keeping should be nerved?

Some persons can think of pleasure or pain for twenty or thirty years with much emotion, who gaze in apathy at the same for eternity. Many cheerfully propose to struggle so much of their lifetime for wealth, that they can expect afterwards to enjoy but few years with their *villa* and imagined felicity in retirement. Yet their hearts throb feebly, as you hold before them the idea of bliss or pain for much more than a million of years of *old age* in eternity. Why is this? Is it not because the vision is enfeebled by confinement to little objects? The narrow dark mouth

of an earthly mine, or of a grave, close to the eye, is defined, and the sight of the eye affects the heart, while a vast mountain side, at a little distance, is vague. The vision is not stretched to the attitude and sweep of the object. But the earthly-minded vision will be enlarged by death to take in the idea of the first million of years—the first appalling mountain of woe—to be succeeded by an endless chain of the same towering peaks. Could a mountain of gold be possessed on earth, it would only exist then in the memory, and would indeed be far from a diverting idea to allay horror at sight of the masses of woe.

Good angels and devils are awake to the worth of the soul. With the former, “there is joy over one sinner that repenteth.” (Luke xv. 10.) Of the latter—thousands—a “legion” find one soul mark enough for their envy and malice. (Mark v. 9.) You—the very soul exposed—may think yourself too small an object for such extensive fiendish effort. But, if a legion—a division of five thousand fallen angels—were to be busy seventy years (though indeed your life may be much less) in luring your one soul to hell, the aggregate of effort, measured by the agents and duration, would, compared with the endless result, be less than a drop to the bucket. Would not the bulk of all the waters upon earth be finally far exceeded by the merest stream an inch wide, if that stream should have un-

limited extension? And would not any efforts of fallen angels for the ruin of one soul be trivial compared with so vast a result as the endless ruin?

Think then of the soul for whose deception in love of gold fallen angels stretch their powers; over whose escape good angels rejoice; over whom God himself bends in anxiety, saying, "How shall I give thee up?"

The sympathies of God are not the less surely operative because he saw it best, all things considered, not to force souls from choosing hell. In boundless benevolence he desires that they would choose right for themselves, in a wisely ordered state of inevitable trial. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" (Ezekiel xxxiii. 11.) The incorrigible refuse, and are finally ruined, under Divine lamentations: "But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh! that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!" (Ps. lxxxi. 11, 13.) "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not." (Luke xiii. 34.) "And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day,

the things which belong unto thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes.” (Luke xix. 41, 42.)

Precious soul ! God, above all others, is anxious for you. He only comprehends eternal joy. No good angel has full conception of what awaits himself. The Divine contemplations alone go on, and on, to the far, far distant points of a glorified creature’s growth, and transcendent exultations in bliss. God only sees what a heaven is in store for you. Ah ! He is reluctant you should fail of it.

And the Divine survey alone can take in the future woes of the lake of fire. No fallen angel has full conception of what awaits him. The glance of God alone can go on, and on, to the far, far distant points of a state of perdition. He sees what a hell awaits you if you heed not his drawings. O be warned by the secret voice of his loving Spirit ! Do you not now hear it ? Listen again. If you turn away to the idolatry of covetousness, the immaculate robes of both infinite justice and mercy, in eternity, will be unstained with the blood of your ruined soul. God sees its worth far above the worth of gold, however you may look away from the difference ; and, depend upon it, he is resolved to be clear. And to this end may he not, in his providence, have sent to you these pages, and arrayed facts before your mind in the light of his Word and Spirit, not the less surely opening your

eyes to your duty and danger because he stoops to use clay in the process.

Has there not been presented to your view a duty, the performance of which may at once secure you from the sway of the great idol, Mammon, and help to remove the chief hindrance to the greatest work in the world—a duty clearly enjoined by Scripture—illustrated by impressive examples—suggested by your consecration at conversion and subsequent religious experience—by the pitiful condition of hundreds of millions of benighted and infatuated souls—by the worthiness of church enterprises—by money's worthlessness in itself, and its deceptiveness—by gratitude for God's unspeakable gifts, and by prudence for the interests of your precious immortal spirit?

Surely, as you ponder these motives, your heart is taking a right direction.

May the God of all grace aid you, and may you enter upon the consideration of the next Essay strongly resolved to know and to do your whole duty!

AN ESSAY

ON

SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

CHAPTER I.

SYSTEM IN ENLARGED BENEFICENCE OBLIGATORY.

ATTENTION is now entreated to *system* in the proportions and times of liberality.

We proceed in the hope that, in view of motives presented in the preceding Essay, the reader is not indifferent to the duty of giving *at once*, according to ability, after a candid and judicious allowance for sanctified business;—*at once*, according to his obligation, in view of having submitted in the past to no system sufficient to secure to God his just claims. Should not all in hand due to Him be paid immediately, with more scrupulousness than a note due a fellow-mortal? And, as to the capital conscientiously retained for prosecuting business, should there not be

a speedy and valid arrangement by will, to secure such final appropriations of it as seem to the impartial conscience suitable, in view of the claims of God, as well as of the family ?

After the appropriation in liquidation of arrearages, and the making of the will, the duty is to give *periodically* from profits or income, according to ability.

1. If the Bible did not specifically enjoin system in beneficence, would not the duty be obvious on the ground that it is wrong to delay any acts of faithfulness to God ? Is there not such a delay, if His money is retained for periods longer than are necessary ? Therefore all practicable frequency in giving is a clear duty. Why not as often, in all possible cases, as the return of the day which belongs to God ? Why not then let the money which belongs to Him also be rendered ? Retaining money from God for unnecessarily long periods, in uses for one's self, must be a higher crime than retaining instalments due to a man. And surely no more before God than before man can we be excused by alleging an intention to bring up arrears after the money, for an improper time, shall have been used for ourselves.

The Lord, in His church, has use for all that is His, as fast as it becomes due. There are ways for its use of more consequence than an earthly creditor's plans for gaining compound interest.

The propriety of systematic appropriation of earthly goods to God may be further inferred from its having been required in the Mosaic dispensation, with such regularity and frequency, and in such set proportions in worth, in the forms of sacrifices, oblations, and tithes. And we learn from Josephus that the Jewish church had regular weekly collections on the Sabbath at their synagogues, of not only tithes, but spontaneous gifts, to be sent to the Temple.

We need not be surprised to find weekly beneficence introduced into the Christian church. Inspiration has enjoined it therein; and therefore,

2. Our duty in systematic beneficence is more than a matter of inference.

“Now concerning the collection for the Saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) For “in store,” Macknight reads “in the treasury;” that is, the general fund of the church. This depositing was to be (as formerly that of the Jews) a weekly custom, without any waiting to lay up money for some time; and then, under the labored appeals of a visiting preacher, being put into a painful suspense and struggle to decide how much to give, and probably to conclude a due donation too

large because required all at once, in consequence of unjust delay, when, if it had been given in suitable instalments, it would have seemed proper, and the burden have been easily borne.

Can one with Christian candor evade the force of obligation from the passage just quoted? Was the epistle containing it limited more than others? It was addressed not to the Corinthians only, but also to "*all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ.*" (1 Cor. i. 2.) Was the passage merely *advisory*? "*As I have given directions, so do ye.*" Was each church member included? "*Let every one of you.*" Was there a rule laid down for proportion of means applicable to any man in any age? "*As God hath prospered.*" This passage fixes an obligation as extensive as the grounds upon which it rests, namely, worthy uses for "*collections,*" the existence of "*churches,*" a return of "*the first day of the week,*" or of any periodic time for donations, if necessarily less frequent; and "*as God hath prospered.*"

Why are the churches now so indifferent about this rule, while there is a general acknowledgment of others as binding, which were not as much guarded for general application? Can we not discover in what direction the vision is defective? on what point eye-salve is needed? that the disease of Christendom is a

blindness with reference to the duty of pecuniary consecrations to God?

Therefore, dear reader, if your eyes are not closed, you cannot but see the duty of systematic beneficence with reference to the financial necessities of the church. And you cannot suppose that these uses for your money, affecting as they do the spiritual destiny of men, are of less moment than was the supply of the physical wants of the saints at Jerusalem, as contemplated in the Apostle's direction.

CHAPTER II.

SYSTEM ILLUSTRATED BY EXAMPLES.

1. *The pious in former dispensations, and the Christians of the Apostolic age.*

We need not repeat the scriptural references to them as given in the preceding chapter. But that we may feel more strongly our obligations, let us imagine how these patterns of beneficence would have adapted themselves to times like ours.

Would not those of the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations have felt like pursuing a still more strict system in beneficence than they did under a faint dawn,

had they found themselves under a risen sun, that was shining for all nations ; and had they, in addition to a sense of gratitude for themselves, possessed the evidence of being the appointed and responsible instruments to lead perishing souls from darkness to see the “great light”—of being such instruments under the declaration, “the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising ?”—if, with all this, they had been met with the fact that the want of money was the great lack in the notable work, and that God was bounteously and systematically supplying them with money for this very purpose, would they not then have been stirred to still greater zeal in systematic contributions ?

Behold the example even of Zaccheus : (Luke xix. 8.) He, with light from a darker dispensation only, and excluded as a publican from the full advantages of that, could give *half* his goods to the *poor* :—such a man !—so much !—with reference only to temporal destitution ! How should this incite us to plans of ample giving, enjoying, as we do, gospel light, and viewing, as we do, the spiritually poor on the brink of hell ?

The examples of early Christians shine from St. Paul’s declarations, as already adduced. But it may be remarked here that these examples should be the more impressive to us from their having been closely

connected with the full guidance of the Holy Ghost in the church, as well as from their great regularity in view of even the merely temporal wants of men. Mark, then, the responsibility resting upon the church of a later generation, when the absence of miraculous gifts leaves a greater dependence upon other means which cannot be effectively used without money. Can such a church be excused for resting, in fitful and inadequate contributions, under a conviction of the sad destitution, not of the bodies merely, but of the precious and undying souls of men ?

2. *Examples in systematic beneficence since the Reformation.*

(1.) Lord Chief Justice Hale, Hammond, Doddridge, Baxter, and others, regularly gave a *tenth* of their income ; Dr. Watts a *fifth* ; Mrs. Rowe *one-half* ; Mr. Wesley, as we have seen, *all* above actual necessities. The Countess of Huntingdon, though quite wealthy, regularly gave all she could save by a retired and economical life.

(2.) Mr. Nathan R. Cobb, a pious Baptist merchant of Boston, in 1821, at the age of twenty-three, entered into the following covenant, to which he adhered till death. When leaving this world, he praised God that, by following it, he had bestowed over \$40,000 :—

“ By the grace of God, I will never be worth more than \$50,000. By the grace of God, I will give one-

fourth of the net profits of my business to charitable and religious uses. If I am ever worth \$20,000, I will give one-half of my net profits; and if ever worth \$30,000, I will give three-fourths; and the whole after \$50,000. So help me God, or give to a more faithful steward, and set me aside. N. R. COBB."

(3.) "The benevolence of Louisa Osborn, the colored domestic, who, from the wages of one dollar a week, paid twenty dollars a year to educate a youth in Ceylon, as it has been brought to light by the missionary who witnessed the unusual benefits of her donation to the mission, has thrilled the hearts of American Christians."¹

(4.) "Normand Smith, a saddler of Hartford, Connecticut, after practising for years an elevated system of benevolence, bequeathed in charity \$30,000."²

(5.) "An anonymous writer says of himself, that he commenced business and prosecuted it in the usual way, till he lost \$900, which was all he was worth, and found himself in debt \$1100. Being led by his trials, through God's grace, to trust, as he hoped, in Christ, he, at the age of forty, determined to take God's Word for his guide in his business, and consecrated his earnings to the Lord. The first year he gave \$12, for eighteen years the amount has in-

¹ "Zaccheus, &c.," by Rev. S. Harris, p. 10.

² Ibid. p. 44.

creased by about 25 per cent., and the last year he gave \$850; and he says he did it easier than during the first year he paid the \$12. Besides, though with nothing but his hands to depend on when he began this course, he paid the whole debt of \$1100, with interest, though it took him nine years to do it.”¹

(6.) Is there not a pointing to weekly financial system in the start of the great modern revival which raised up the Methodist Church? Such system to some extent was inwrought in the very means so clearly at the foundation of the spiritual temple as class-meetings. “Many met together to consult on a proper method for discharging the public debt, and it was at length agreed, 1. That every member of the society who was able should contribute a penny a week. 2. That the whole society should be divided into little companies or classes, about twelve in each class; and, 3. That one person in each class should receive the contribution of the rest, and bring it to the stewards weekly.”²

(7.) Among the Wesleyans in England, there have been many striking examples. In the statistics of beneficence, for Wesleyan Methodist Missions, as re-published in each Annual Report, it may be seen that, while there have been many donations and

¹ Ibid. pp. 44, 45.

² Wesley’s Journal, Feb. 15th, 1742.

legacies of hundreds and even thousands of pounds sterling, there have been numerous benefactors, who, however unable to bestow so largely at once, have contributed, periodically, to an aggregation of like amounts. And there is noted one donation upon annuity of ten thousand pounds—a noble example for any member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who might thus use fifty thousand dollars to secure a systematic income for perishing souls.

(8.) Mr. Samuel Budgett should be noticed. “The sum of his benevolence can never be known: he did not, until late in life, fix on a proportion of income as the minimum of his gifts; when he did, the proportion was one-sixth. Of course he did not resolve to give away only that, but to give away that at least. Had he been doubtful as to the extent of his givings, he would unquestionably have fixed a proportion earlier; but he knew well that all he had was *tithed*, and more.”¹

(9.) Mark an impressive example in the M. E. Church—E. S. F., (or “Zaccheus,”) of Baltimore. He says: “When I began business, it was with the intention and hope of becoming rich. A year afterward, I became a Christian, and about the same time met with ‘Cobb’s Resolutions,’ which I adopted. Some four or five years after, I read ‘Normand Smith’s Memoir,’ ”

¹ “The Successful Merchant,” pp. 373, 374.

and also Wesley's Sermon on the Use of Money, which led me to devote all my gains to benevolent uses, reserving for myself five thousand dollars while I remained unmarried, part of which I have bequeathed to relations and the remainder to benevolent purposes. Up to this time (1853), about eighteen years, by the grace of God I have given away about thirty-four thousand dollars to benevolent objects, lent about five hundred dollars to those in need, which has not been returned, making in all about thirty-five thousand dollars."

(10.) Ponder one more case. Mrs. Eliza Garrett, a member of the M. E. Church, lately deceased in Chicago, had for several years drawn from a large estate but four hundred dollars a year for her own support, and managed to give away nearly half of that for pious purposes. But she kept in view further beneficence. In restricting her own annual income, she was steadily aiming to disencumber her estate of certain liabilities, and make available, as she finally did, a legacy to the church of property worth *three hundred thousand dollars*.

CHAPTER III.

SYSTEM IN ITS RESULTS TO THE CHURCH.

1. Great results would accrue from due and regular distribution by wealthy members, but not the less surely from such distribution by those in moderate or even humble circumstances.

The latter class of members are far more numerous than the former, and the smaller amounts from the great number may furnish an aggregate equal to that of the great amounts from the smaller number.

Doubtless many persons of limited means have been years in the church without giving a cent for some deserving objects, because not able to contribute when called upon, according to their preconceived notions of liberality. How many, at annual missionary efforts, being unable to bestow even one or two dollars, might, during the year previous, more easily than some poor men pay for useless or hurtful indulgences, have laid aside ten cents for the heathen, on each first day of the week, and thus had a half-eagle to bestow! And observe, were system to draw from the 783,358 members of the M. E. Church the average of ten cents, weekly, for missions, there would be raised from this branch of the general church alone upwards of *four millions of dollars annually.* What a collection

of "sinews of war" towards sustaining Immanuel's army in aggressions upon heathendom !

Were there a weekly laying aside for missions, of even *three cents* for each member of the M. E. Church, the annual income would be, not only \$260,000 as now hoped for, but \$1,222,038.48. With this income, how she could raise her head ! "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners," and rapidly take new grounds for her King.

In departments other than the missionary, of course the same principle exists for wonderful effects. A steady supply of many drops may make a large stream. Irregular dashes may result in but little.

But let not children grow up without the formation of right pecuniary habits. An annual income from the Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church, if each of the 553,065 scholars was represented by only one cent weekly, for *missions*, would be more than the present annual receipts from the whole church for that object.¹ Yet this income would not be the grand result to be sought, but rather the raising up of church members with right financial habits. And, in order to this, very many children should be

¹ Some liberal donors may be surprised at this statement, but it is accounted for by the fact that only a few give much, and many give nothing.

disciplined to contribute more than one cent weekly, and all should have their hearts taught to feel the claims of more than one cause.

Were adults and children generally to attain the standard of duty, might we not expect that systematic beneficence, by example, would be extended throughout fast increasing ranks of converts in heathen nations? There are proofs of a right susceptibility, in this direction, in those nations. The case of Sir Jamesetjee Jeejeebhoy, an India Parsee, is well known. He gave for the construction of hospitals, education, &c., within ten years, more than £100,000. In connection with his wife, he tendered to the government £36,000 in addition to the above-named sum, to be expended for charitable purposes. He has also offered to construct an aqueduct which is to cost £18,000.

A Chinese convert, in connection with the English Church Mission at Ningpo, whose wages are only \$5 a month, from which he supports his family, has contributed nearly \$14, or about one-fourth of his annual income, for the support of the gospel.¹

Should the Methodist Episcopal Church and her sister denominations advance, as they could, by the aid of proper financial system, there might soon be a fulfilment of Isaiah iv. 13: "O, daughter of Zion,

¹ "Journal of Missions" of A. B. C. F. M.

thou shalt beat in pieces many people; and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth." Thus influences might rapidly accumulate, so that the whole world would speedily hear the gospel. A result not less probable, and indeed much more glorious, than the earthly ones for which Christians may withhold their money.

2. *Giving upon system, proportionately to income, in the church, promises much in view of the increasing wealth of her members.*

The membership of the Church of Christ (may we not say of the Methodist branch especially?) has been much made up from a class who were not likely to be living in a state of lethargy, under the weight of inherited wealth. While some in affluence have been reached, generally those of a medium and of a poor condition have been gathered in. From these latter grades how many efficient men of the age rise in rapidly increasing wealth, and more or less displace those who are relying merely on inherited, and often mismanaged and decreasing estates! As might be expected, there is a fast-growing wealth in the church. Men, graciously reached (and fully qualified for even temporal success) by the church, a few years ago, who then without wealthy parents were becoming skilful and hardy in labor and business, as appren-

tices or journeymen, as clerks or silent partners, with a limited per centage on profits, or as laborers upon the lands of others, or with only some cheap acres,—such men have acquired estates, the income from which is more than sufficient for a supply of their needs, and have got fully in the way of a dangerous accumulation for themselves and families, or for a gloriously effective distribution for church enterprises. Here is a striking peculiarity, which, in two directions for the safety of souls, should incite to beneficence systematically proportioned to income.

3. *There is in the peculiar elements and characteristics of the American nation much ground of hope in the financial efficiency of an American church.*

Here the nations of the earth are meeting in the persons of hardy, energetic, and restless representatives. May there not thus be created a special facility for exerting an evangelizing influence upon the countries from which they come?

Is it not quite probable that the Lord has raised up a nation in the last days peculiarly adapted to facilitate the publishing of the gospel to all mankind? In just such a nation you find yourself. Here is, indeed, ground for a sense of responsibility. And responsibility is far from being lessened for a reader who, without disrespect to other denominations, believes that a church not second in qualifications to take ad-

vantage of the favorable national elements, is the very one which has nursed and sheltered him, and is now relying upon him for pecuniary instrumentality.

4. The increased facilities for spreading the gospel, in the discoveries and inventions of the times, give promise of great results from contributions.

The decisive bearings of which these modern advantages are susceptible cannot be known without an adequate financial supply for their improvement. A right direction of the streams can alone make efficacious for good the Californian or other fountains of gold. In addition to the contact of multitudes from different nations, as the metal draws them together, the right use of the treasure would supply other needed preparatives and facilities for reaching destitute souls.

An ample supply of money to the church can alone lay under contribution, for a full development of gospel-spreading power, the steam on sea and land, and the processes for strangely multiplying thoughts upon paper, or more strangely sending them on the wings of lightning, in advance of the noiseless steps of time.

If, for the cause of Christ, advantage be not opportunely taken of these wonderful discoveries and inventions, may they not help to turn the world from Him? And may they not incline churches to a Laodicean

state, and even cause the removal of the candlestick from those now the most luminous and highly favored, and which will therefore be least excusable for delinquency? How important, then, is systematic beneficence in the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as in others, at this crisis of the affairs of our world?

5. *A man in his own schemes acknowledges the advantages of system.* Should he grudge the benefits of it to the church of God?¹

6. *National prosperity is dependent upon systematic financial supplies.* Should the kingdom of grace be defrauded of so great an element of success?

7. *Fully matured system in contributions would tend to secure enterprises of the church from financial fluctuations, so perplexing to her counsellors in their plans for the future.*

8. *By periodically and frequently contributing money to the religious causes of the day, our attention would be regularly and frequently turned to them, and a much more settled interest be felt in them.* Our prayers would be added, and our faith strengthened for the success of the Gospel. Let none forget this. Nay, let it not be overlooked that entering upon

¹ A few thoughts at the conclusion of this chapter, and at the commencement of the next, may deserve distinct consideration, though they are so self-evident as to need but a brief announcement.

systematic beneficence is a sacrifice essentially preparative for right prayers and faith in many hearts. Certainly this sacrifice is necessary in hearts which are ready to extol prayers and faith, from a covetous desire to serve the church in other matters than dollars and cents.

CHAPTER IV.

SYSTEM, IN ITS RESULTS TO THE CHRISTIAN HIMSELF.

1. In all practicable cases of laying by money for God "upon the first day of the week," the donor is the better sustained as a cheerful giver by what that day brings in cessation of worldly calls, and in holy associations and influences.
2. System at fixed times and in fixed proportions may secure the Christian's patience from surprises which might threaten it under sudden and unexpected calls for money.
3. System may be for some persons a needful guard against acting to be seen of men. It will prevent waiting to give only on occasions of public appeals and responses, and the display of subscription papers. Not that men must refuse to act on such occasions,

but beneficence confined to them may leave some hearts unhealthy in their secret motives.

4. System will bring you to act from principle. You will not be left to be moved by an uncertain flow of feeling. The periodic time arrives, and, feel as you may, you act.

5. System in what you are so conversant with as money, tends to discipline the mind and exalt you intellectually.

6. *In order to peace of conscience, are not regularity and frequency in sacrifices of money a needful return for regularity and frequency in God's bestowments?* In view of his “*daily loading*” you with temporal “benefits,” can you feel acquitted without a disposition for *weekly*, or frequent offerings of temporal things? “His mercies are new *every morning*,” yea, oftener, as your body receives food upon system in portions and at regular times. Indeed, God has a *system*, going to your rescue every time you breathe. Do the church enterprises say to you “Give, give,” oftener than you thus say to him, “in whose hand your *breath is*,” and to whom, therefore, as your lungs inhale the life-giving element, you are virtually saying, “Give, give?” How often have you thus said this, while perhaps making to God but few of the returns for which your powers and opportunities have qualified you! Yet he has graciously forbore to

exclaim, "I am wearied with the cry of 'Give, give.' " Surely, then, you would not, you dare not, fretfully exclaim to him, "I am wearied with the cry 'Give, give,'" as the words come to you in his Scriptures, in his providence, and in his church!

But think of invaluable spiritual blessings. Think of "daily bread," and of the breath of life in the higher sense. "He holdeth your *soul* in life." "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge;" while, if you will, you may have his word hid in your heart, and the constant care of his Spirit, with the ceaseless flow of his unspeakable love. And if the Divine hand withhold some *temporal* advantages, in that very act it opens a way for the more refined riches to be derived from adversity: "More precious than gold that perisheth, tried in the fire," (1 Pet. i. 7;) the gracious procedure of God being far higher than would be yours in withholding from his treasury copper to drop in gold.

7. *The power of habit which persevering system in beneficence will bring to your aid is needed to counteract soul-ruining influences.* We all know the force of habit; how, from frequently repeated acts of the physical, intellectual, or moral powers, even in matters most opposite and repulsive to the original tastes or tendencies, many men find themselves borne away by an almost irresistible current. So it is from the gross

relish for a nauseous weed, or a fatal drink, to the refined tastes of the head and heart for the high sublimities of science.

Now keep in mind that the world, in this nineteenth century, though freed from some of the hobbies of former ages, finds enlarging opportunities for the exercise of its selfishness in the wide pursuit of money. This being the great channel for exertion and excitement, aside from the true God and eternal life, it is the one in which Christians are most likely to be carried away. And without some counter-influences, there is, to increase the danger, a mighty force of intellectual habit operating in the necessary attention to business, as a Christian finds himself pressed in a money-seeking crowd. To avoid being temporally crushed in the crowd, he passes along. He adopts systematic efforts for gain. He has retrospections and reckonings of profit periodically. They are frequently, if not weekly, or even daily, made. He has operating upon him, in brief, a pecuniary system tending to make him worldly; to keep him looking short of heaven. And if he does not adopt a system of regular and oft-repeated acts of money-giving, as well as of money-getting; if he does not, in pecuniary affairs, turn his eye to spiritual results as well as to temporal, to heaven as well as to earth,

is there no danger of his being eventually "drowned in perdition?"

"The care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word." (Matt. xiii. 22.) If there is no counter-habit, that "care" easily ensues from the force of the habit of acquiring, and then insidiously banishes grace. The fatal care is represented in Scripture as the being of a "doubtful mind," or, rather, as in the marginal reading, "*in careful suspense.*" (Luke xii. 29.) It is that state of mind, through the day and through the week, and in the business reflections of every evening, and especially of Saturday evening, which gives to the heart a restless vibration between hope and fear, between elation and depression, in regard to merely temporal results. Is not this care inconsistent with essential elements of grace in the heart? Is it not inconsistent with faith in God, even as to his providence, and as to his ability to make comparatively small "things work together" for our "good?" And can we be in perturbation in regard to *temporal* supplies, and maintain saving faith for *eternal* blessings? It is essential to a safe state that we live with heaven in view—with an eye on the prize at the end of the race. Can we be so living while susceptible of intense elation or depression in regard to pecuniary affairs?—As well might we believe that a man has his heart resting on

the end of his journey, who originally started in eagerness for a proffered million of dollars, while we observe him sitting by the way, muttering, "Always having bad luck—a quarter of a dollar gone;" and then see him cheerfully start up, turn backward, with his soul in his eyes, and whispering to himself, "But I trust to find it after all." When the young convert starts for heaven, with more in view than a million of dollars, and assured that any temporal losses on the way cannot overtax his resources for the journey, ("will not be above that" he is "able to bear," 1 Cor. x. 10, 13,) does he then pause either to repine or rejoice in so small a thing as money? "Praise the Lord!" he exclaims, "I have something better in prospect!" What then if you find the old professor a subject of the care we have referred to? Has there been no deadly change? The sin has been against the revealed fact that every loss may add to the final inheritance: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a *far more exceeding* and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 17.) Should a man on his way to receive a million of dollars fret about the loss of a few coppers, especially if he were assured the loss would add "*far more*" to the amount awaiting him? In the face of an immeasurably higher fact, against a vastly higher interest, is the fatal care exercised—even against the promise

that adversity shall work "*a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" What sin! What a deadly effect must follow!

But the choking influence of this care is not exerted only in a direct interference, as already noticed, but in diverting moisture from the heart, as would "thorns" from the roots of plants. The victim becomes, at the close of the day or week, exhausted in spirit. He is chafed and jaded by disappointment, or worn down by the excitement of success. He has scarcely any juices of the heart remaining for spiritual sustenance, enjoyment, or activity.

And let the poor man remember that this soul-ruining care is not operative in the striving for great fortunes only. If he fastens his heart upon the sum of a few dollars, and presses on without calmness in faith, and without the centering of the affections on heaven, he is a victim for the time being, to say nothing about his becoming habituated to the excitement caused by having money continually in view, and of the liability to (what is generally the effect, when a coveted amount is attained) the fixing on a higher one for another exciting race.

It should be an alarming thought for any one venturing on, without the habit of systematic beneficence as a guard against this care, that he may irretrievably sink, while saying, "Peace, peace," to himself. For,

observe, the choking process, as in case of a mere plant, commences, to a careless observer, imperceptibly, and goes to the fatal end so gradually as not to alarm the constant beholder. The ruinous work is hidden under reputable appearances to the church, and to one's self. It is the surest mode for a soul to be lost without forfeiting the good opinion of a money-loving age. No wonder the Saviour's illustrative phrase, in regard to the choking, was "*the deceitfulness of riches.*"

System in contributing money will bring to bear against all the foregoing dangers the mighty force of *habit*. And will it not break up the fatal care which exists only in the inordinate desire of money, by destroying its charm? How can money be inordinately desired while the heart, by system, is subjected to a practical sense of its being divinely intrusted, and of its increase laying him under increased obligation to God? While the business man contributes his profits in proper frequency and extent to God, the deadly care cannot maintain vitality any more than could thorns with the frequent severance of their roots from the soil. The ice of worldliness which may commence to form upon the affections, could acquire but little thickness while the laden wheels of beneficence regularly and frequently rolled through the stream. Satan would not find for a net, cords of

sufficient length to hold a soul, if they were clipped by frequently recurring appropriations of money. But a lack of system would leave room for a fatal delay. The thorns could be fixed, the current deeply congealed, the net completed around the victim.

8. *The general prosperity of the times suggests systematic beneficence as needful to prevent a fatal concurrence of mind and heart in worldliness.*

The business man's *intellect*, as we have seen, necessarily goes forth in his sphere of exertion. There might be little need of guarding the *affections* against following inordinately, if adversity only awaited effort. But, in our times, excepting now and then a brief season of reaction from prosperity itself, the great majority of capable minds are meeting with success after success, and finding a way by each one to secure a greater. There is something in such prosperity peculiarly exciting to the affections. Without strong guards to prevent their wandering from the true God, they may start off feverishly, in admiration of Mammon, and run fondly curious in his service, to meet new and sudden turns of fortune. And man is so constituted that whatever most agreeably excites his heart, he must love with great ardor. If his heart, instead of holding to the true God, become attached to money, it will pursue it intensely and impetuously, and may go to great lengths of infatuation. Of the

many who start in the fatal way, few take the time and pains to analyze their own emotions.

Without system to discipline the affections, at set times, to dropping money freely into the Divine treasury, as something unworthy, except as mere means to Divinely favored ends, the heart, however gradually and unconsciously, will follow the intellect. The decreasing clamors of conscience will be met with a reference to the lawful submerging of the intellect, without a realization that the heart is becoming interlocked therewith, and rapidly losing the life of faith in the whirlpool. Therefore, as the surgeon's bands may be requisite steadily to confine members or parts of the body to their place, so, in these days of general prosperity, it may be requisite for the cure of the injured, as well as for the safety of the sound, that there be a rigid adjustment to the moral man, of a plan for *giving money*, with a freedom and a frequency sufficient to prevent the displacement of the affections from their proper object. Can there be any effective substitute for such a plan, while God vouchsafes the prosperity in pecuniary pursuits so generally enjoyed by the nation and by the church; while, for instance, the earth so discloses her dark treasures and her yellow one, that the former overfurnish hearth-stones for domestic comforts, and the demands of wonderful inventions for saving labor, and expediting business

on sea and land, and the latter has so overfilled the purses of the people as to be worn upon their persons in needless ornaments ; and while the earth from her surface yields for the masses a superabundance in food and raiment—enough to furnish a full test in the probation of beings susceptible of gluttony, of pride, and of avarice ? Surely “ Jeshurun has waxed fat.” There can be no safe substitute for the regular and frequent giving of *money*, for a people thus prospered.

“ As God hath *prospered*, ” is the rule of inspiration.
(1 Cor. xvi. 2.)

(9.) *Adopt system in view of the Scriptural records of dreadful infatuation and ruin which have resulted from devotion to money.*

Think of Balaam,¹ of Achan,² of Gehazi,³ of Judas,⁴ and of Ananias.⁵ What was the secret of their course ? Let us see.—When the affections have once fully learned to follow the intellect in the chase for wealth, do they not often hastily pass beyond and subject the latter ? The head is dragged by the impulses of the heart, which has no eye. The reasoning faculties become perverted, facts distorted, inferences deceptive, and the Scriptures lowered by loose interpretations. And if a correct conclusion, at times, suddenly overtakes and threatens mastery, it is so

¹ Num. xxii. 7.

² Josh. vii. 21.

³ 2 Ki. v. 20.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 15.

⁵ Acts v. 3.

unwelcome that there is a dogged resistance, or a desperate and successful grapple to thrust it away, and then a violent rushing on to leave it out of sight. When the will becomes enslaved to idolatrous affections, the man may reason as he pleases. He may flatter himself all is right, and exult in an exciting stream of emotions, while he is hurried towards the lake of fire. And, not in all cases, if in that of Judas, may the victim, before the soul leaves the body, have a full discovery of his fate.

Now, dear reader, if you pass on without systematic beneficence, in these money-making times, until your affections follow your intellect, and then the latter submit to the former, you may still pass on to eternal ruin, slighting alarming truths, whether coming to you through these pages or other mediums, with what you may self-complacently deem manly strength of mind, and justifiable indifference.

You will then little think yourself a victim to the spirit of *Balaam's* sin, while you impetuously urge your way to hold fast or amass money, against Divine revelations *recorded*, and against the eternal interests of heathen, or others, who might dwell in the "goodly tents of Jacob" and "the tabernacles of Israel."

You will little think that *Achan* no more surely transgressed a Divine prohibition, in laying aside treasures of this wicked world, buried in his own tent,

than have you, in laying up "treasures upon earth," (Matt. vi. 19,) and in virtually saying, "I will be rich," while resolving to possess more than is strictly needful, and to have it, as it were, buried in your own house, or elsewhere. (1 Tim. vi. 8, 9.)

When fully infatuated, you will little think that *Gehazi* no more surely transgressed against a prophet than have you against the God of the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, and that *Gehazi* was no more guilty of falsehood than yourself, in assuring your conscience that God allowed an unnecessary accumulation, while his Word, his Spirit, and his providence were in substance propounding, as did Elisha to *Gehazi*, "Is it a time to receive money?"

You will little think, before you come to yourself, and feel that it would have been good for you not to have been born, that though *Judas* betrayed the person of the Master for thirty pieces of silver, you, for the retention of an amount perhaps less to your views of wealth, have betrayed the interests of his kingdom.

And you will little think that *Ananias* no more surely kept back a part, than yourself, under professions of being wholly the Lord's.

You will little realize that all these who sinned so fatally in the love of money went on pertinaciously like yourself, with self-satisfying excuses, in fearless excitement, till they acted out what was in their

hearts, so that their true positions before Divine justice could be made manifest. And you will forget that, while you may not be overtaken, as were they by Divine displeasure visible on earth, as well as extended into eternity, it will be because you are under a Divine economy that more generally appoints judicial inflictions to occur entirely beyond this life.

O think, dear reader, be entreated to think, if you thus go on, what will be your retrospection from eternity ! How your whole being will be wrung with anguish, as you wake up, too late, from infatuation, and become filled with a sense of what you have brought on yourself; what wrath and horror—indescribable—endless ! The woes of eternity will immeasurably transcend the sword upon Balaam, the stoning of Achan, the leprosy of Gehazi, the agonies of departing Judas, or the death-fall of Ananias.

Will you not, then, secure yourself against the deadly perversion of affections and intellect, by what we have seen to be the only adequate guard, *systematic beneficence* ?

10. *In what element of life must you be found, if moving in God, fully raised from the fall?*

There is no declaration that God is power, though He is omnipotent; nor that He is knowledge, though He is omniscient; but “God is love.” His infinite centre is love, though from it He has infinite emanations.

tions, in various attributes. What an element must be this love ! And this element He vouchsafes to the faithful Christian. O, glorious thought ! Indescribable idea ! In this you can be in God. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John iv. 16.)

Now, in efforts to escape from the fall, and to rise into God who "is love," system and habit, as in less matters, must be advantageous. And in what is it so important to introduce the help of system, as in the very concerns where the most subtle forms of *selfishness*—of the very element directly antagonistic to *love*—rally under most plausible pretences ? Remember that *system* pervades the universe of God, wherever the fall has not introduced anomalies—whether in the inanimate, vegetable, animal, intellectual, or spiritual kingdoms.

If you would rise, then, from the irregularities of the fall, and find your eternal orbit on high, under Heaven's first law, *order*; if you would thus rise from *selfishness*, the troubled and troublous element most antagonistic to the heaven of love, and from the very *maelstrom* of selfishness—*the strife for wealth*—then adopt *systematic beneficence* for the enterprises of the church in which God has placed you for continued probation.

Forget not the souls of the heathen and of others,

and forget not your own soul. Crowds of your immortal fellows are perishing. The church has the gospel—the only remedy. She lacks money to send that remedy. For this, she has long been *asking*, *pleading*, *groaning*, *weeping*, *agonizing*, almost *despairing*;—she stretches her trembling hand, and presents the greatest motives to surrender money largely, and upon system, the greatest work in the world, and the removal of the greatest hindrance, the greatest results for herself, for millions of souls, for your own soul.

CHAPTER V.

EXCUSES IN REGARD TO BENEFICENCE.

THOSE noble souls—many, we hope—who make not excuses, will bear with the effort to reach those who do.

The design is to notice excuses arising both from reluctance to give *systematically*, during life, and from reluctance to give *largely*, at once, according to over accumulated means, and then *largely* upon system. Both liberality and system have been urged. With reference to both may excuses arise.

It is a philosophical fact that, subsequent to the presentation of reasons and motives, however conclu-

sive on any subject, if the will of the person addressed remain obstinately set on one side of the question, nothing will arise to view but things really, or apparently, on that side; and the resolutely biased person may settle down contentedly under one-sided pleas. If any one who reads these pages thus errs, we would not have him sink out of reach, without light following, to show whither he is tending. The design, therefore, is to examine excuses arising from a spirit of delinquency, as well as some which may be entertained in candor.

1. "God in his sovereignty can bring to pass desirable results without waiting for human instrumentalities."

Does he always bring them to pass thus in nature? Let mankind stand aloof from persons helpless in infancy, or from disease, and see if, in regard to men's *bodies*, desirable results would be attained as frequently as now. How is it in grace—with reference to their *souls*? The Bible—if no human preacher or teacher were Divinely employed—so far from springing in its leaves spontaneously from the earth, is only sent forth for the healing of the nations, as men and women with dollars, and even children with pennies, prepare the way for the labor of the eyes, hands, and feet of still other human beings. And how was it in regard to your own conversion? Had all mankind in this and

past generations been inactive, under perverted views of Divine sovereignty, would your own soul have been brought out of darkness? What, if we cannot arrive at all the reasons why God, in his very *sovereignty*, has determined that salvation shall have an *instrumental*, as well as a meritorious and efficacious cause? The fact is nevertheless before us. Mystery cannot annihilate it, any more than it can the law of gravitation. And, if God is unchangeable, as it has been, and now is, so shall it be.

2. "Cannot He reach the heathen and others, without *pecuniary* sacrifices on the part of Christians?"

Did he through past ages and trains of providence thus reach us, and prevent our passing through life heathens? Had not Christians in the past, in order to accelerate the gospel, consented to sacrifice *money* and opportunities for securing *money*, would not our condition have been the dreadfully miserable one in which a lack of such sacrifices now leaves the groping nations?

How does God, in fact, reach the heathen and others at the present day? By some new agencies accommodated to covetous church members? No, verily. Facts to the contrary are before us.

And when an excuse cannot arise with the absence of rebuking facts, but only from the insidious working in head or heart, of something else, let us beware of the excuse.

3. "But should not the gospel be free?"

Yes, to the heathen, or others, too ignorant to appreciate it, or too poor to support the ministry, as were some for whom St. Paul labored in a double sense. Therefore you who have light and means should contribute to sustain gospel laborers among the benighted and destitute.

4. "Have I proof that the gospel can favorably affect the spiritual destiny of those now without it?"

Yes, if the Holy Ghost sent forth St. Paul and others for such, the Gentiles; and if the Saviour left a command to preach the gospel to every creature. That Spirit, that Saviour, cannot err. They know the state of the heathen and of others, and the philosophy of salvation and damnation better than we. Who will venture to say, in opposition to the Divine procedure, that the gospel can make no favorable difference in the spiritual destiny of souls?

But, even if you could be so short-sighted or presumptuous as to suppose that the gospel affects favorably the present life only, then, if you did to others as you would be done unto, you would not hesitate. Compare your present condition with what you must suppose it would have been without gospel light—allowing for the purpose of argument only, as it cannot be true in fact, that you would as probably have been fitted for a holy heaven—and then decide

if some of your predecessors upon earth should not have made sacrifices for you, equal to those now asked of you for others, rather than that you should have been deprived of the gospel? Take, with this, the eternal bearings of the case, and surely you cannot sit with a closed hand.

5. "But, after all the missionary and other contributions and efforts in the past, Christianity seems to gain but slowly upon false systems."

If this be true, is not the cause to be found, awarding all due praise for past donations, in the disproportion between them and both the ability of the church and the financial calls of aggressive work? At the same time, false systems have had hundreds of millions of superstitious devotees in the habit of making large pecuniary sacrifices.¹

¹ Listen to a foreign missionary in regard to *Brahmin* donations. "But it is to the almost incredible profusion of the offerings presented at such festivals, that we would desire to call your special attention. In general, it may be said, that the bulk of the people, rich and poor, expend by far the larger moiety of their earnings or income on offerings to idols, and the countless rites and exhibitions connected with idol worship. At the celebration of one festival, a wealthy native has been known to offer after this manner: eighty thousand pounds weight of sweetmeats; eighty thousand pounds weight of sugar; a thousand suits of cloth garments; a thousand suits of silk; a thousand offerings of rice, plantain, and other fruits.

There is no more cause to wonder that Paganism dies hard than that Popery does.¹ The contributions of the votaries of both should put to shame many enlightened souls living under a pure gospel.

Yet, let not the victories of the cross be overlooked—victories in spite of obstacles. In view of the adaptation of false systems, not only of Mohammedanism, and its modernized edition Mormonism, and not only of Paganism in her own features, but especially of Paganism masked under Roman Catholicism—in view of the adaptation of these to the gratification of the propensities of the natural man—the wonder is, not that Christianity has spread no further in this world, but that it has spread at all—indeed, that it has any foot-hold. It is opposed to

On another occasion, a wealthy native has been known to have expended upwards of *thirty thousand pounds sterling* on the offerings, the observances, and the exhibition of a single festival; and upwards of *ten thousand pounds annually*, ever afterwards, to the termination of his life."—*India and India Missions*, by Rev. A. Duff, D. D., pp. 230, 231. Edinburgh, 1839.

¹ Few readers need to be informed of the taxations of Popery, successfully imposed upon its purgatory-fearing subjects, upon the wealthy in large and periodical amounts, and upon indigent domestics, in considerable proportions of their weekly wages. It would be well if the intelligent fears of Protestants, for themselves and others, would draw to such systematic liberality as do the blind fears of Papists, as well as of Pagans.

the desires of fallen man. A rock of itself would not ascend a mountain. Then the Everlasting Arm is underneath the gospel. The false systems are masses naturally descending along the mountain of humanity, by their gravitation towards hell. But full gospel sway in one soul, after the employment of all the instrumentalities of the church, is a Divine victory—a something contrary to the natural course of things—a *miracle*. It is an achievement which would be far more wonderful and grand than the spread of a bad system over all mankind to the end of time.

The Christian may indeed glory in the cross.

It may be replied, further, to the excuse under consideration, that the past rate of gospel conquests is no necessary index to the future. Holy fire, like natural fire, may for some time be catching slowly at scattered points, and then in materials more prepared, and under an influence “from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind,” become suddenly and surprisingly general. The increasing preparations in such large portions as China, Hindostan, and Turkey, may soon conspire, with the power from on high, to set the earth in a blaze. In this great sense may Christ be about ready “to send fire on earth.” In view of all these facts, let not covetousness hope to be guiltless in withholding means, under the short-sighted plea of past slowness of conquests.

6. "Granting that the missionary and other enterprises are fully deserving, may I not indulge in doubts of the worthiness of some other channels for my money, in the church?"

If you could be justified in such doubts, you would still be bound to give according to ability, as a steward for God; the difference being a division of your benefactions among a smaller number of causes—those you acknowledge to be deserving.

As the worthiness of the different departments in the church has been presented (pp. 45–50), but few remarks will be made here. Observe, that you can be more confident that the various church enterprises are deserving of money than any of your own private schemes for which you may retain it. Some of the church enterprises are specifically instituted by inspiration. The others have been started with careful counsel and forecast, by many Christians of clear minds and expansive hearts, in whose united wisdom, and guidance from heaven, you can have more confidence than in your own alone. In the "multitude of counsellors" for the church, there must be more probability of correctness, than in the decisions of any one man, especially in his own affairs, where selfishness is so ready to pervert judgment. We are not maintaining the infallibility of the church, but

that there is more danger of error for one man, in his own schemes, than there is in the church.

Do you ask proof of the apostolic authority of the church of your choice, so far as there can be any succession of such authority, to originate and give character to great enterprises? Behold it in its ability to say to hundreds of thousands, "Need I, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle." You know that such a one is a church, as to experimental inward things. And you can indeed conclude, if God vouchsafe these the greater characteristics, He hardly withholds the less—the forms. In making the genuine kernels to grow and ripen, He has doubtless allowed enough of the shells. This is better than to have the shells alone gathered up for exhibition and boasting.

7. "I was not consulted in the arranging of the church's enterprises."

Some of them were arranged before your birth. As to others, a general council of church members could not have well been had. No disrespect was intended to you. As many were consulted as Divine providence seemed to permit—among whom there were wisdom and a single eye, which you would not put beneath your own. They would gladly have mingled your counsels with theirs, had circumstances allowed.

8. Some reader whose past omission of system has resulted in an undue accumulation, may say that he "cannot, at once, secure cash due the cause of God without selling at some sacrifice."

But this excuse cannot justify delay, if the sacrifice from sales will be *less* than the benefits to church enterprises from *speediness of supply offunds*. Remember, that in the kingdom of grace every moment counts, according to its situation in the stream of time. A moment now, surcharged with right influences to accumulate at a threefold rate through many periods of time, as have been moments in the days of the Apostles, or even of Luther, or of Knox, or of Wesley—a moment thus surcharged now, might count for a thousandfold more by the end of time, than might a moment, after the delay of a few years or even months. How great, then, it might be incidentally asked, is the error of delaying for the last will to appropriate money for gospel ends?

But, granting that, in a very few cases, there should be some postponement—though not indeed until death—before the church treasurers can count the Lord's share in cash, even in such cases, each steward can acquit himself, without any delay, by legally transferring that share, *in its present form*, to the control of the Lord's Zion. If this proposal touches a tender string in any heart, and begets a painful vibration, is

is not because it brings a test to the secret motive --and to the sincerity of professions of designs for the future? Can he be spiritually safe who does not obtain his heart's consent to such a test?

The excuse "I am in debt," when much more than the amount owed is possessed in value, may be considered in this connection. The debts could be paid were some sacrifices made at present, or in prospect. If a man has a pound, idle in a napkin, he may not be excused before God by the plea of owing a few pence. A man may go through life, in reality worth much more than the Lord allows him, under Zion's pressing calls for money, and yet, for a pretext to withhold, or under speculating investments, he may ever be ready to say, "I am in debt."

In the case of those who really do owe beyond ability for payment, *systematic justice* may prepare the way for *systematic beneficence*. Some debtors—by self-denial, so healthful for body and spirit—may with industry leave secure a stream of income to accumulate sufficient for creditors, as surely as that afterwards the same stream may furnish something for beneficence. The bitterness of self-denial will be far less than the sweets to a healthy conscience of paying debts, as well as afterwards of bestowing, however little, to the cause of God.

9. "Before giving upon system, I would attain to

a certain amount which seems to me needful for myself and dependants." Are your own affairs so much more important than those of Zion, that they should have an overplus accruing, while there is no distribution to the under-furnished ones of Zion? And may not God see that the overplus aimed at would not be best for yourself or your family, in that spiritual sense, which he keeps graciously in view? Hence, in your eager efforts to attain it, with omission of systematic giving of part of your gains, may you not fight against a kind Providence, to suffer chagrin if disappointed, or fearful judicial consequences, if successful? If, however, the amount fixed on be appropriate and safe, may it not be attained in connection with systematic bestowments from your gains, and your soul be kept safe by the guard, so necessary, as we have seen? Indeed, in this course of giving, if God sees best, your gains towards the proper amount may be the more rapid. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth."

10. Whether with little or much to bestow, do you say, "I fear my contributions might not be economically, if honestly, applied by others?"

If this were not an absurd fear, it would still be your duty, as a steward for God, to give all you could, and, so far as you lacked confidence in others, to apply it in some way yourself. So, no money could be consistently withheld on this plea.

But, upon examination, you will find at the points of church expenditure, men having watch in whom you will not hesitate to repose full confidence. And you will scarcely desire to accompany missionaries to foreign shores to examine bills for payment, or to have the task of seeing how the books or tracts are disposed of in laborious walks of colportage, or to oversee disbursements in any other department. Though, if you choose to do so, after having given your money, you need not fear being repulsed at these spheres of action.

Even if it seems to you that there is in some instances too much incidental or preliminary expense, in extending saving influences—if, without the knowledge of estimating committees, in regard to necessary expenses of men in service, you do not understand the propriety of some allowances for salary, or something else—yet you cannot consistently withhold funds, when it is perfectly apparent that these preliminary expenses will be met at any rate, and that what you give will add to the amount for perishing souls; and that therefore, if you withhold, *you withhold from perishing souls.*

11. “I may give more than my proportion, if I bestow liberally upon system through life.”

No; for that will be the proportion God requires. And if, at your death-bed review, the aggregate could

look too large, it would only be by comparison with the donations of those who come short of their proportion, and who may come short of rewards in heaven. But leave others to God, while lovingly rebuking them, at least by example. You may have more light than they. Are you sorry for this? *Greater light*, though it leaves the *delinquent* soul to sink the *lower*, puts the *obedient* soul in a way to rise the *higher*. Think of this.

12. "I am uncertain as to what proportion of my gains I should subject to systematic givings."¹

This is better than if you were confined to a fixed rate by specific revelation, for your mind is left free to choose nobly, cheerfully, and the more acceptably to Him who "loveth a cheerful giver."

If you err a little at first, in contributing more than your circumstances permit, the evil can soon be corrected, and will be less than that of no system; and you had better err on the *spiritually*, than the *temporally*, safe side. It will not hurt your *heart*, if you commence with too much. It may, if you com-

¹ That one-tenth is the minimum required, the reader will hardly doubt after perusing "The Great Question, by Rev. L. White," one of the three excellent Prize Essays lately issued by the Tract Society of the M. E. Church. But that Essay, as well as this, insists on the obligation to voluntary beneficence exceeding one-tenth according to ability.

mence with too little. Besides, it will be easier for you to fall in the proportion of giving, than to rise. And, if you estimate a little too high at first, will you not suffer less evil *temporally*, than would the cause of God and your own soul *spiritually*, in being deprived of the happy influences of the Apostle's rule for system? But, if there were neither much reason, nor much practicability in regular and frequent giving in your own case by itself, yet the force of your example might be drawing others to duty, who can best practise upon such a plan, and who may neither be safe nor effectively beneficent without.

When a longer period than a week is inevitable, a donor can make it as short as possible.

13. "I may be kept hesitating, in order to ascertain the comparative merits of the church's enterprises, so as rightly to divide my donations among them."

As Zion's enterprises are all so good, and as the success of each one tends to secure that of others, if you give to all equally, it will be more acceptable to God than for you to remain inactive till your sense of responsibility subsides. While you are waiting, your money might be securing more good in secondary departments of Christian benevolence, by an immediate and cumulative influence, than it may, if delayed, in the primary ones. But you need not be long in

doubt as to comparative claims, if you sincerely resolve to part with money. "Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as *silver*, and searchest for her as for *hid treasures*, then shalt thou understand." (Prov. ii. 3-5.) There will be an orderly evolving of light from the providence of God, the bearings of the church, and the counsels of well-informed Christians. Be sure to read attentively the Annual Reports, and the periodicals of the church, which are specially fitted to acquaint you with the current condition of this wicked world, and of the renovating agencies of Zion.

14. "The treasuries of the church may not be at hand, for the reception of frequent systematic bestowments."

Some of them are, and to those distant, you can send your contributions by mail, or some other medium. Would it not be desirable, in all possible cases, to have them secured for early transmission with the gifts of other church members of your locality, upon some general plan appropriate to circumstances, as did the ancient Jew and primitive Christian? Thus, system would be joined to system. Can you not be instrumental in starting such a plan, and facilitating its execution? If this be impracticable, your own will can at least make a way for your own donations.

And if, in your locality, you should awhile appear singular in faithfulness to system, your example will not be lost. Though many jewels are preferable to one, yet one may shine the more, if set in jet.

15. “I am but one in the church, and the aggregate of systematic contributions from me may make no observable difference in the great mass of results.”

As God is no respecter of persons, if you are released on this ground, so are all others. And where can be the river without the drops?

But if even a dew-drop remain upon a leaf after the sun has long been shining, the great thing to be noticed is, not that the vast ocean is to lack that little drop, but that there is a fixed law transgressed: *the dew does not yield to solar attraction.* If God were to permit this, though in the case of a single drop, it would perplex his sons that shouted for joy at the creation. And if, in a cold night of ignorant selfishness, you have settled upon earth, and under the Sun of Righteousness, long since blazing from the east, now refuse to surrender your substance towards the aggregate of the vast results which may be looked for in His kingdom, then the judgment-book will present to you, not only the ocean of results robbed, *but your wilful transgression of law.* Depend upon it, no Divine indifference to such transgression will permit heaven to be perplexed.

And even the dew-drop to be exhaled must be exhaled systematically, not irregularly, as shaken by uncertain trembling of a leaf, but according to laws inherent in the solar rays, and in itself. So, if you would be acquitted as having contributed aright to God's cause, you must let the laws of your being fall in with the revealed laws and the attractions of the Sun of Righteousness. You must adopt *system* in beneficence.

What if the principle of one making but little difference be applied to your individual self at the gate of heaven! There will be a great multitude inside. You will scarcely be missed. And is not your mind stored with sufficient facts in regard to the duty of systematic beneficence, to lead you to fear exclusion from heaven as a possible result of delinquency?

In inquisition for the blood of souls, which will assuredly be made in the great day, will the Judge contemplate the church of the nineteenth century merely as a collective unity? Will the judgment proceed upon men in a mass, or upon them severally, each in his individual identity? Will not each church member be as surely dealt with in regard to a vast church delinquency, in which he knowingly had a part, as in regard to any solitary delinquency? And, in the rewards of the final day, who believes that a church, on account of its victorious marches for Im-

manuel, will be regarded in its collective capacity only? Will not each faithful member have his own reward?

Then, dear reader, if you act your personal part, while no other one acts his, or if all others unite with you in the blessed work, your portion of joy will be sure. "Every one of us must give account of himself to God," and there will be no loss of individual identity in heaven or hell.

16. "If I am right in all else, I shall not greatly fear from omission in this one thing."

But can you be "right in all else," if you fail in this? Does not "the love of money" here, involve a wrong spirit towards God and man, which, indeed, may become "the root of all evil," in your case?

Can you be right, in general, towards God and man, if, with unreasonable excuses, you allow your affections to flow in a channel which diverts from the greatest work on this globe, if not in the universe, the supply most needed—a supply which God's word commands, and is suggested by holy examples, by your past religious exercises, and by pressing wants and worthy agencies; a supply enjoined, in system and steadiness, as well as largeness, by gratitude for the unspeakable and systematic beneficence of God to us, and by direct inspiration,—by examples of illustrious saints, and by

the prospects of most glorious results to the church, and to your own soul ?

Is a trifling thing then omitted, even if it be reduced to “*one* thing” not only in your own words, but also in the Saviour’s words to a certain young man ? (Mark x. 21.) And if any such young man would enter into life, or if you would, must there not be a surrender of possessions, according to the Divine direction, either wholly, or in part at once, and in future parts, upon system ? And might you not as well disbelieve your ears if you were accosted by the voice which addressed the young man, as to disbelieve the call to enlarged and systematic beneficence made upon you by Scripture injunction,—by the Saviour, and by the Spirit, and by the bride, and by the common sense of him that heareth. Surely you will not, as did the infatuated young man, go “away sorrowful,” but resolutely go forward to the rewards of heaven, in the duty of enlarged and systematic beneficence.

CHAPTER VI.

ADVICES AS TO IMMEDIATE BENEFICENT ACTION.

THE remarks now to be submitted, it is hoped, will not prove unwelcome or unprofitable to any reader who may be resolved upon duty. But they will aim at loving, though plain, dealing with wavering and endangered readers.

1. *Prayer.*

If you have not decided, from the depths of your whole soul, upon faithfulness in enlarged and systematic beneficence, be entreated to take at once the most appropriate step for your own safety, in view of what has been presented, by *raising your heart in importunate prayer for Divine aid to enable you to decide according to light received.* You will thus soon find yourself enabled to make the needful resolve. As you receive the spiritual aid, *decide, decide at once,* before the gracious ability be trifled away.

2. *Now is the easiest time.*

Having just given attention to the subject, and, under the moving of God's Spirit, its claims being freshly impressed upon your heart, *it is easier for you to yield now than it can ever be after teaching that heart a lesson of resistance.* If you pass through

one struggle against the Spirit, with your volition rampant in disobedience, the future may bring no remedy. The laws of your mind, and of your moral agency, may not permit a more full contemplation and comprehension of the duty, and of the motives to its performance. The Divine Spirit will never be more strongly operative. You will never be younger nor more pliable. Satan will have no less influence over you. Alas! there may be no hope, if, when the metal is softened to the utmost of available heat, the controlling hand relax from effort, because of difficulty, while that hand is steadily to grow weaker.

3. Decide in love.

Though you are plainly, and you may think severely, warned of the danger from indecision, yet let not this prevent your deciding in love—in love to God and your fellows, as well as yourself. As you flee to escape the doom of the covetous man, you may flee with your eye fixed on bright and heavenly motives. Determine to give your money in love. “God is love.” If you would act fully aright in and by him, you must attain a loving frame of mind. Will you not struggle in prayer till you find yourself in such a frame? “God loveth a cheerful giver.” He is such a giver himself. Love only can secure you the cheerfulness with which he sympathizes. Have likeness to the Deity in love, in order to com-

munion and harmony of spirit with him. Be a branch supported in life and fruitfulness by the sweet mystical element which enlivens the Infinite vine. Then will you "bring forth much fruit."

4. *To be only almost resolved is to fail.*

This is an axiom needing no comment, but deserving careful attention.

5. *You must resolve at a given point of time.*

There is no diffusing present moments. You can never spread an act of volition over a space of time, and thus make it easier. After obtaining full light upon any path of duty, there is not, to use a figure, a yard square, whereon to turn around—"thinking of it"—to make decision easier. Between your present standing point and the realities of eternity, you will find only just space enough, as it were, for your feet, as you pass along upon mere points—*individual nows*. At each successive step the past moment will be for ever gone, and the future not possessed. Wait long as you may—like the open sinner in Satan's latest reserved trap, procrastination—you will still find yourself narrowed down to a single *now*. Oh! then, grapple for your life, and for the life of others, *at once*. Decide fully *now, now*, upon enlarged and systematic beneficence.

6. *There is a critical point.*

With you there must be one critical point of time

(perhaps just now being attained), in the consideration of beneficence, when, like the boat upon the shore, at the highest tide's most extended wave, you must at once be set decidedly in motion, or remain decidedly motionless. That point may be at the very moment you close the present sentence; and, in your reflections, either "incline your ear and live" to full purpose, or secretly, in dread of the cross, incline your ear to Satan's suggestion to "think of it a little while," that *little while* to serve his purpose of diverting your attention from the fresh force of the subject, so that, when your mind advertes to it again, with a once cultivated desire to evade action, you will perpetrate a second delay with increased ease, and so on to cool dismissal and fatal forgetfulness of the duty.

Surely you have not dared to evade a right decision.

7. *Try your resolution by action.*

After deciding aright, with all needful firmness, as you may suppose, be sure to seek an early opportunity to *try your resolution by action.* This will test it. If you do not seek a point for the first *act* of suitable beneficence, or if, when the point arrives (which you can make speedy), you find yourself hesitating and inclined to think a little further, you have surely deceived yourself as to a decision. Oh for firmness! May God energize your whole soul!

8. Fear not carnal criticism.

Beware of pride in the heart, which would draw it to hesitate and grow cold (too cold to act at all), under the idea of acting before critical worldlings, or luke-warm professors, with “coolness”—without appearance of “sudden excitement.”

Shall Satan take us captive, as he does gross sinners, who sit back from the altar of penitential prayer, lest some brazen and callous spectators charge them with fright? Will foolish pride and hesitancy from fear of man, where the path of duty commences, be more tolerable in us than in those never renewed? Let us look to ourselves.

9. Never intermit in the discharge of this duty.

Be entreated to enter upon action, deeply resolved against avoidable breaks in the system of giving. It cannot, indeed, be enough to attempt pacifying conscience with only a *start* in the right course. But do not forget, even when aiming at general punctuality, that any *one* unnecessary omission may make another more easy, and that one a third, and so on to a full relapse.

10. Keep in view spiritual ends.

In order to be sustained through life in *cheerful* faithfulness, as a financial steward, ever cultivate lively views of the spiritual ends to which your contributions are adapted. Thus, you will find yourself

drawn to an exercise healthful for yourself and for others—the offering of prayers for great results in the kingdom of grace. And you will be kept, not only in the practice of outward acts of beneficence, but free from mere formality in that routine, and free from a spirit of servitude. You will not act as a bondman, but a son.

11. Be decided once for all.

Be on your guard against the strong tendency of the mind, after it has arrived at a correct conclusion upon full reasons, to waver, when, occupied with other subjects, those reasons hover at a distance.

In any hesitancy thus arising, raise your heart for Divine aid, that, having for sound reasons once volunteered in a course of the greatest moment to the Church of Christ, and to the world, and to your own soul, you may not prove a renegade.

12. Gain all you can, so as to give the more.

Follow Mr. Wesley's directions:—“These cautions and restrictions being observed, it is the bounden duty of all who are engaged in worldly business to observe that first and great rule of Christian wisdom, with respect to money, Gain all you can. Gain all you can by honest industry. Use all possible diligence in your calling. Lose no time. If you understand yourself, and your relation to God and man, you know you have none to spare. If you understand

your particular calling, as you ought, you will have no time that hangs upon your hands. Every business will afford some employment sufficient for every day and every hour. That wherein you are placed, if you follow it in earnest, will leave you no leisure for silly, unprofitable diversions. You have always something better to do, something that will profit you, more or less. And ‘whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.’ Do it as soon as possible : no delay ! no putting off from day to day, or from hour to hour ! Never leave anything till to-morrow which you can do to-day. And do it as well as possible. Do not sleep or yawn over it : put your whole strength to the work. Spare no pains. Let nothing be done by halves, or in a slight and careless manner. Let nothing in your business be left undone, if it can be done by labor or patience.

“Gain all you can, by common sense, by using in your business all the understanding which God has given you. It is amazing to observe how few do this ; how men run in the same dull track with their fore-fathers. But whatever they do who know not God, this is no rule for you. It is a shame for a Christian not to improve upon *them* in whatever he takes in hand. You should be continually learning from the experience of others, or from your own experience, reading, and reflection, to do everything you have to

do better to-day than you did yesterday. And see that you practise whatever you learn, that you may make the best of all that is in your hands."¹

13. *How to make an estimate of proportion of gains to be given.*

Having your heart honestly and fully determined on duty, you might derive some help towards the correct estimate of the amount now due the Divine treasury, and of extent, in proportion of future income,

(1.) *By deciding how much you could lose by providential dispensations, and still neither yourself nor your family suffer.* Cheerfully surrender what God may providentially take away without inflicting real injury.

(2.) Imagine yourself as you either once were, or may be, not possessing any worldly goods, and in a pious mood deciding what you would bestow to church enterprises, *upon condition of your enjoying the prosperity with which you are actually favored.* May not the pledge which you must suppose coming from yourself in such a prospect, be the one now Divinely required of you? Verily it is, for, "*as God hath prospered,*" is the rule of inspiration. (1 Cor. xvi. 2.) Here is a way for light in making your estimate.

14. *Will you not record your vow?*

Having heartily decided and fixed upon your suit-

¹ Wesley's Works, vol. i. p. 444.

able proportion, you cannot reasonably object to secure yourself the more in the path of duty, by signing a form of pecuniary consecration.

And might it not be well to place it, or a copy of it, at the commencement of a blank account-book for the entry of what you may “lay by in store” for God, and how it may be expended.

If you object to signing such a form, may there not be a hidden defect in your resolution? If there were no such defect, would you feel free to evade a strong guard to the mind, as a written pledge confessedly must be? Can you intelligently refuse the recorded vow to the Lord, from fear of possibly making the matter worse by breaking it in the future? No; for if you are too undecided to put your name to paper, are you not making a *certainty* of grieving God by indecision, upon a question perfectly clear to your conscience? Do you choose the present *certainty* of sin, instead of a future *possibility* of the same? To be safe—to avoid sinning against light—must you not vow, at least *in your mind*, to be beneficent up to your ability? To record this vow, is not to expose yourself to regrets for having broken it, but to introduce an important stay *against* breaking it.

If you change the following form, will you not adopt something more expressive of your own firmness, and yet of your dependence upon Divine aid:—

"I hereby, once for all, with my whole heart, in earnest prayer for Divine assistance, resolve that, during my life upon earth, I will devote to the enterprises of the church of Christ, as much, and as frequently, of my worldly goods, as my impartial conscience may decide to be my duty: and for the present I fix on —— as now due, and on —— as the proportion of subsequent profits or income, to be paid [here name the stated times], which proportion and times, at least once a year, are to be reviewed, and, if practicable, increased, in obedience to the first part of this resolution."

[Here date.]

[Here signature.]

In conclusion upon the subject of beneficence, we will venture to remind you that you are acting under the eye of God. If you fail in rightly contributing, He will not fail to keep an account.

And when the "books" of the last day shall be "opened" (Rev. xx. 12), it will be seen what you might have laid "by in store" on each "first day of the week," or with some frequency, and how it might have been distributed in life-giving channels. *In that day, if you forget on earth, will come up in your memory for full review the truths upon beneficence which have now passed before you.*

A FIELD FOR HEROISM.¹

ADDRESSED TO PRIVATE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH,
MALE AND FEMALE,—AS WELL AS TO YOUNG MINIS-
TERS.

ARE you ambitious for a notable sphere of action ? Eternity, not seventy years, is your lifetime. Heaven, not this earth, nor hell, is the true circuit for fame. You are amid subtile and sublime elements of battle. The field is the world. The foe is sin. The force to oppose it is the Gospel. The agents are Christians. You are one, or should soon become one. You are living under a personal responsibility, in regard to the most startling lack of this age, if not of all ages. The light of evangelical truth is withheld from a great majority of mankind. Hundreds of millions are groping in the dark. Death will introduce but few of them, indeed, into an unpolluted heaven, unless death can save from pollution. You will proffer your individual efforts either as a lay-helper, or as a preacher ;

¹ Some months since, the writer furnished, in substance, this and the succeeding article to the Tract Society of the M. E. Church (Tracts 471, 472); but he is constrained to insert them here, from a sense of the importance of the duties they inculcate.

or, by needless delay, indecision, or refusal, you may bring upon yourself the responsibility of this fearful destitution. Do you say, "I never felt called to missionary work"? How do you suppose any one is called at the present day? By an audible voice from heaven? or by Scripture light, combined with a knowledge of the state of the world, addressed to a tender, teachable, and *inquiring* conscience, under the influence of the Holy Spirit and the appeals of the church? Has not God allotted to *probationers* the task of attentively searching for the path of duty? He may no more force them to discern that path than he will forcibly thrust them into it when discovered.

The truth is, *an unreserved surrender to God* must be the only full qualification for receiving light from him, and an impression of duty which conflicts strongly with the natural desires. After such a surrender, you will construe Scripture candidly in regard to the heaviest cross. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." If rightly consecrated, you will not view this as addressed to others only, but you will begin by allowing that, at least, it may be addressed to you; passive under Divine influence, you will feel drawn to gratify the Divine desire. It is the desire of Him who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Centuries of time cannot lessen its intensity, while he contemplates the hellward course

of immense masses of heathen souls. If fully consecrated, you will not seek ease of conscience at home, by constructing antagonisms to the Divine command, or a loose theory of the probable safety of the heathen.

In the spirit of full consecration, we beseech you to reflect upon the following: "He that winneth souls is wise." "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." You will not interpret these passages so as to keep out of view the severest cross-bearing for yourself. You will not leave for others their application to the most arduous and the most needy field of effort. You will be convinced that if, at last, among the "wise" that will "shine as the stars for ever and ever," you must be "wise" now in "winning souls;" and "shine" now as a "light in the world," so as to do the good which you "know to do," of the highest kind, to perishing, immortal souls.

When fully consecrated, you will not, in a strange hallucination, devolve the evangelization of the heathen upon the church as a *body*, irrespective of *individual* effort; but you will be quite aware that nothing is done by a Church, excepting as particular members

act. You will infer that, until the foreign fields have a supply in relative proportion to that of the domestic, no single individual can escape God's severe censure for unqualified refusal or needless delay.

The cross of departing will not fill your consecrated spirit with anguish. The burden will be made light by burning love to Christ and souls, and by respect to the rewarding "weight of glory."

If, after months and years of full gospel light, by failing of full consecration, you fail to become the salt of the earth to the most needy parts of it, are you quite sure that you will pass from this life safely? We beseech you to consider calmly, and determine, as in the presence of Him who searcheth the heart.

Do you say, "There is a great work to be done at home"? True, and the most needy part of it is missionary work, where churches are yet feeble. But this work is under the oversight of official men, who survey a world-wide field for gospel effort. If, in a spirit of entire consecration, you consent to missionary service, then the wisdom of these men will assign you a post. In regard to your designation, you will certainly allow the wisdom of those at the head of ecclesiastical affairs, and who are surrounded by able clerical and lay advisers, to be as deserving of trust as that of an interested individual. You cannot, therefore, reasonably fear that an unreserved

surrender to the cause of missions will remove you to foreign fields, unless you be most needed there. Jealousy for the home work may arise from a lack of consecration, instead of a warrantable fear of recreancy to that work. In response to a recent inquiry into the convictions and plans of students, in fourteen leading colleges, out of five hundred and forty-six preparing for the ministry, it was ascertained that only forty are contemplating the missionary work. Is there a valid excuse for this disproportion ?

Look into one part of the vast foreign field :—

“ One of the judges of the Calcutta court has just published a volume setting forth the claims of British India as a field for missions. It comprises, according to the most recent computation, an area of one million three hundred and fifty-five thousand and two hundred square miles, and contains a population amounting to *one hundred and seventy millions*—all of whom are accessible to the messengers of the gospel. The number of missionaries, including those of all denominations, bears, however, no proportion to this vast population. Rajputana, with seventeen millions of inhabitants, has no missionary ; Oudh, with three millions, has none ; Nagpore, with four millions five hundred thousand, has two ; the Nizam’s territory, with ten millions, has none ; Scinde, with one million five hundred thousand, has one missionary ; Gwalior,

with three millions, has none ; Nepal, with two millions, has none. Many great cities and towns are in a like state of spiritual destitution. The author gives a list of sixty-five populous towns in the north-western provinces, none of which have a missionary.

"The great city of Lahore has only two ; Furruckabad, with a population of a hundred and thirty-two thousand five hundred and thirteen, and Mirzapore, with seventy-five thousand and twelve, have only the same number. Meerut with more than forty thousand, Muttra with more than sixty-five thousand, and Cawnpore with a hundred and eighteen thousand, have only one each ; so it is with Salem and Cudapah, in the Madras Presidency. In like manner many important places, in various parts of the country, which, from special circumstances, deserve particular attention, and are spheres of great influence or celebrity, have not a single missionary. Thus it is with Ajmere, Bhurtpore, Brindabun, Santipore, Purneah, Gwalior, Mooltan, and Jhansi."—*Christian Advocate and Journal*.

Such facts are startling. Surely, no man will say home calls are paramount. The home field is not quite so destitute. You are not quite as much needed at home.

Are you already, or about to be, engrossed in secular pursuits ? Ponder the words of one, who

made the sacrifice he urges upon others, addressed “To pious young laymen.” “Let me entreat you, my young brother, for a moment to cast your eyes over our own land and over heathen lands. Such a survey will constrain you to exclaim, ‘The harvest is great, and the laborers are few.’ You will also be constrained to make the exclamation, ‘We must have more laborers, or Christ will be dishonored, and millions of souls must be lost.’ Perhaps you have often made this exclamation. Then why are you not ministers of the gospel? Why is it that you have chosen to be farmers, or merchants, or mechanics, or lawyers, or physicians?

“I am not aware that there is any dearth in any of the professions just alluded to, as there is a dearth in the profession of the ministry; and I can see no particular call from God which should have constrained you to join their ranks. Have you not a call to the ministry? Let the first question you ask yourselves in the morning be, Am I going to glorify my Saviour to-day by not setting my face toward the ministry? and let the last question you ask yourselves at night be, Have I glorified God to-day by not setting my face toward the ministry? While engaged on your farms, in your shops, in your law, or in your medicine, often put the question to your consciences: Do I believe my God looks down upon me with as much

approbation as he would, provided I were now engaged as a minister, laboring in the vineyard of his Son? Whether you, beloved brethren, think of it or not, it is a most melancholy truth, that more than forty thousand millions of the heathen have gone into eternity since Christ lifted up his voice and cried, ‘It is finished;’ and that fifty thousand are dying every day, and passing into eternity without any preparation to meet God! dying without any one to pity them! And can you stand quietly still and see multitudes thus perish?

“If, however, notwithstanding what has been urged, you believe the command of Christ, ‘Go and preach the gospel,’ does not apply to you, I request each of you to enter into your closet, and shut your door, and on your knees, in the presence of Him whose eyes are upon you, sign your name to the following:

“‘O, my Saviour, I know that thou hast commanded “Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” I know that there are six hundred millions of my fellow men who are perishing in heathen darkness; but thou knowest that my reasons for not entering the ministry are such as will, I trust, stand the test of thy scrutiny in the day when I meet thee at thy bar.’”¹

¹ “The Redeemer’s Last Command,” by Rev. J. Scudder, M.D., Missionary to India, pp. 78, 80, 86.

Perhaps you are saying, "If I do go abroad, I choose to select my own field." Is it then certain that you are entirely consecrated? Is your own will surrendered? Does your design thus to select arise from sound reasons for fearing the Church authorities are less competent than yourself to make a right selection? Or does it arise from a desire to secure an easier and less dangerous field than those which may be occupied by your brethren? Do you say, "I may be sent where no others will go"? Then, may it not be to the most needy field, just because of the difficulty in supplying it? And on this very account, if you maintain a suitably consecrated spirit, will you not go with the more alacrity?

"But I may be sent where my life will be shortened." The spirit of entire consecration cares not for this, provided there is assurance of carrying out the Divine will. The church is bound to publish the gospel to all. If missionaries, in some instances, should seem to sacrifice their lives, how do we know but this would be, to observing heathen, the most effectual argument for a final reception of Christianity? Could the sustaining power of true religion be more strongly proved in any other way? The consecrated man is ready to leave to the regular authorities of the church the determination of the comparative value of life at home, in the old routine, where pulpits

are so close together, and the gospel so frequently falls upon inattentive ears. And if your full surrender should result, as is improbable, in shortening your days, you may be sweetly resigned, in the confidence that Divine Providence has ordered your steps. And you will prove the faithfulness of the promise uttered by the Saviour, "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it."

But you will, perhaps, say, "I may not be learned enough;" "I may be too young;" "I may be too old;" "My physical powers may be insufficient;" "My family circumstances may be ill adapted;" "Money more than men may be needed for missions." These excuses are put together, because they can all be met by one answer. In entire consecration, you cannot withhold from the church the declaration of your full surrender, accompanied, as it may be, by all the facts in your case; because it is evident that your brethren, who have the whole work before them, can, better than yourself, decide whether it is inexpedient for you to go on a mission to the heathen. It will be much the safest to submit to the impartial judgment of others, after you have given them the facts, than to follow your own conclusions. As surely as where self-will strongly inclines one to any course of action there is danger of overrating capabilities and facilities, so surely where self-will *opposes* there is danger of

underrating the same. Then let others judge in regard to extent of learning, age, physical powers, family condition, and pecuniary ability of the church.

You may add, "It will be inconsistent for me to go without the consent of one who may be fixed in opposition, and who may lay moral claim to my attentions at home." If you would be safe, for yourself, before God, make the declaration of your own submission; then any individual in your way may feel that he or she is standing between you and the Divine will; and if you lovingly and patiently reason, ply motives, and look up for the Spirit's influence, it may not be long before the concurrence of the other party will be given. You may expect it, unless you become indifferent to the removal of the opposition, if not secretly glad that an obstacle exists.

"How shall I offer myself?" According to the usage in the church of your choice. If in the Methodist Episcopal Church, write to a bishop, or to the Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society. The head of any institution of learning, or a presiding elder, or a brother in the ministry, or your pastor, can facilitate your noble design, and explain the particulars concerning yourself which you may not wish to state.

O, trifle not with the demands of the Almighty by refusal or evasion! You may hush the upbraidings

of conscience for this life. Then you may live at ease. The claims may be forgotten. You may be amused by wealth, or honor; but the subject will come up again in a different light hereafter, even the light of the fires of the last day. How happy, then, will you be to remember that to the beseeching call of the church, in view of a perishing world, you answered, "Here am I; send me." Do you so answer? May Heaven bless and guide you!

A SPECIAL PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.

1. *The training of children for missionaries is a notable demand of the times.*

A night of ages still broods over heathendom. A stream of dark souls still rolls on to eternity. A majority of mankind are without the gospel. Can they reach heaven without it? Unless grossly debased moral natures can be changed by the death of the body, then that death must introduce the heathen, with here and there, it may be, an exception, to an eternity of pollution and consequent woe. The Saviour "was moved with compassion," in view of "multitudes" who "were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd," and said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." Who, then, will venture to assume that benighted souls are safe without laborers? The Holy Ghost moved St. Paul and other inspired men to traverse many heathen lands,

as well as the one from which came the cry, "Come over and help us." Who dare assert, in opposition to intimations from the Holy Ghost, as well as from the Saviour, that the heathen do not need the gospel to secure their salvation ?

Something must be done ; all agree in this. The great failure is not in Divine provisions for the nations, but in church instrumentalities.

Can this great delinquency of the Christian church be remedied by appeals to the mature in the laity and ministry ? Alas ! too many of these have hearts connected with defectively trained intellects, which grace does not rectify ; too many are possessed of rigid feelings and prejudices, in relation to the home work of the gospel as compared with the foreign ; too many shrink from toil in dark places of the earth, as from something inglorious for high abilities. We must turn our attention to the children for a full cure. And the younger the child the more hope, if there be deposited in the soft and swelling heart the seeds of truth, in regard to the great demand for missionary labor, and the glorious reward to follow.

No parent should decline the effort to superinduce correct thinking, and feeling, and action, for fear of failure. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," is the grand rule of inspiration. Will God excuse a delin-

quency which arises from fear of exceptions to such a rule?

That we must depend upon the rising generation for an adequate supply of missionaries, is the conclusion of pious and penetrating minds. At a "Union Missionary Convention," held May, 1854, in New York, in which leading men of different denominations prayerfully considered the demand for laborers, Rev. Dr. Alexander said: "This important question respects the awakening of a strong desire in young men to take part in the work. How shall the churches be awakened? Evidently by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. But the mere reviving of the spirit of piety in the church is not enough. The great duty of the church, in relation to the work, is the *Christian training* of children by their parents." He was followed by Rev. Dr. Bangs, who thought Dr. A. had touched the very point. Hon. Walter Lowrie made a most impressive address on the great wrong of parents, who stand in the way of their children going to the heathen. And a resolution was adopted, contemplating the stamping of "vivid impressions [as to training children] on the minds of church members, and especially Christian parents, Sabbath School and other Christian teachers."

2. *Be moved by a wonderful example of parental consecration.*

It was a consecration much greater than you can make—involving anguish for a loved one, far beyond what yours can suffer. It was the surrender of an only son. It was to provide endless bliss for you and your loved ones. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

While this Son was sweating blood under the dread of what was to be “made to meet upon him,” he prayed, “O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!” But he was left a surrendered, as well as a surrendering one. And he was not allowed his Father’s presence, as “his soul” was made “an offering for sin,” in a mystery of agony, between darkened heavens and a quaking earth.

Do you say that this Son was to “see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied with the glory that should follow”? So, in the humbler sphere, may it be with your child. As a self-denying missionary, following the Son of God—though not indeed in vicarious steps—your child may be pressed on, and may press on to rewarding glory, as great for the servant as was the other for the Master.

Do you say that you, being human, are not qualified to imitate the Divine being, in surrendering a child? Bear in mind, that God is ready to “put His Spirit

in you." (Ezek. xxxvii. 14.) If you decline the proffered aid, if you prefer to sit in weakness under the dread of the cross, will your weakness excuse you?

3. *Think of the Divine right to your offspring.*

"As I live, saith the Lord God, behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine." What if the owner bereave you of the loved one by death? Even then calm submission is enjoined. God may remove what you will not surrender, and say, "Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet make no mourning for the dead." O, consent that your Maker shall have your child, alive, upon earth, for most honorable and profitable service, in a great exigence of the church! Rev. J. Scudder, M.D., late a missionary in India (four of whose sons are now laboring there, and two remaining ones preparing to go), when seeking the consent of his hesitating mother, said to her, "When you consecrated me to God in holy baptism, did you ever intend to take me back?" The answer was, "Go, my son."

Though the consecration of your child should be immediate and persevering, he can remain with you till his powers are sufficiently matured for service, and till the call from Providence and the church of God is evident. And, after the parting, it is not

improbable that you may meet the loved one again upon earth. Indeed, you may spend your last days on earth with him at some glowing point, where converted heathen may rejoice around you both, with prayers for blessings upon your heads. At any rate, you will do the most to secure a meeting with him before the throne of God, where, with the fruits of missionary labor, you may both realize "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," worked for you, by the comparative "moment" of "affliction," in the earthly separation.

4. *There is peculiar encouragement to the parental surrender in the very magnitude of the cross to be borne.*

It is probably the greatest cross your mind can contemplate; and for this very reason its endurance would likely be a kind of guarantee for your spiritual safety. For, if you endure the heaviest cross, you can the lighter ones. And if all crosses be borne, your soul, through grace, will not fail of heaven.

5. *The spiritual safety of your child may be secured.*

Having resolved to train him to fitness for missionary service, you will feel fully committed to labor for his conversion, as the first great preparation for his work. And if he be nurtured up to missionary efforts, it will not be without such exercises of his mind and heart, upon the preciousness of immortal

souls, as will involve strong consideration for his own.

If you think it possible, after he is matured for the noble work, that the Lord will have most need of him in the church at home, you cannot fear he will be disqualified. And if you think it possible that the church of the next generation will need, at times, *money* more than *men* for missions, you cannot fear that one trained to give *himself*, would withhold his earnings.

6. *What are the excuses of any hesitating parents?*

(1.) "God only can call to preach." This proves nothing against training sons to fitness for such a call, nor against training sons and daughters to co-operate with preachers in missionary stations. The great work cannot progress to advantage unless preachers are furnished with helpers.

(2.) "I am too poor to educate a child for missions." This cannot excuse you from doing your utmost to direct your child up to the point, where a completing education may be providentially possible. In the poorest family, there is ability to impress on the young heart a growing sense of the condition of the heathen, and of personal responsibility. If, with such steady effort, your pecuniary resources in the future, or some charitable facility for education, or your child's own efforts, should not concur for all

needful preparation, you will have done what you could, and will receive the Divine approbation. But you will doubtless find that *man's extremity* is God's *opportunity*, and that his providence has in store some provision for accomplishing what may now seem improbable.

(3.) "My future temporal wants may demand my child's attentions at home." It is not, indeed, as certain that you will have much future upon earth, as it is that the heathen are now in misery, and on their way to a fearful and eternal future. But should you attain old age, could you, in this land of temporal and spiritual blessings, have wants like those of the benighted ones, who make journeys by rolling on the bare ground three miles a day, or who throw themselves from a high wall, or second story of a house, upon iron spikes, or roll themselves among bundles of torturing thorns, or dance over a blazing fire, or bind themselves to a moving wheel, or stretch themselves on the earth during hot days and cold nights, till seed germinates in soil fixed upon their lips, and who, after all, die unprepared for heaven ?

O, let your child go to tell such victims, or others equally blind and miserable, of the true source of merit. Let them hear of Jesus. And, in regard to your temporal wants, your child, in the service of the church, may be more sure to aid you in time of need,

than if left to the uncertainty of secular schemes at home, without the favor, if not with the frown, of God.

(4.) "I may be discouraged by the difficulty of inclining my child's own heart to the task." If you begin before the tender mind is preoccupied, and depict missionary service with its true glories, you will find no discouraging work. What opposite views and designs are entertained by different men and women, according as their minds and hearts were influenced in childhood ! In case of delay, until the child's heart is fixed upon the schemes and excitements of his native land, the task is more difficult ; but even then, God may not release the parent from steady counsels and prayers, until no more can be done ; and the seed sown may spring up in the after life of the child. When the faithful parent shall have departed to the rewards of heaven, the son or daughter may act out the tendencies superinduced by early instruction, and join the most valiant and important band upon earth.

7. In conclusion, will you allow a few suggestions as to the training process ?

(1.) *First of all, have faith in the influence of the Holy Ghost.* While this is the great secret of effectiveness in your efforts, it is, being hidden from the senses, the most easily slighted.

(2.) *Let the training means (especially on the part*

of the mother) begin at as early an age as possible. Here let one speak whose service, and whose successful training of his own children, give weight to directions.

"This training must be commenced, in many cases, (cases of early mental development), before the child is two years of age. This may be a novel doctrine to you, but though novel, it is not the less true. 'Let us but consider,' says Dr. Skinner, 'the amount of knowledge which a child of common capacity acquires before the completion of its third year. The mind of that child has already advanced to a vast size compared with what it was at the beginning. It has already become a great treasury of knowledge. How many persons, places, things, does he know! What a store of ideas has he in his understanding! How many comparisons has he formed among them! How many logical conclusions has he drawn! He has acquired the free, and easy, and delightful use of, perhaps, more than one language, and can call a great multitude of names, and has an admirable skill in constructing sentences and making discourse. Shall the intelligence which has compassed all this in *less than three years*, be considered too small to demand much industry and pains in securing, if possible, its just exercise and discipline? Yet such, it would seem, is the view generally taken of it, even by Chris-

tian parents. Have you little sons or daughters who are delighted in spending hour after hour in turning over the leaves of a picture-book, that their opening minds may be diverted by the newness of the objects which they anticipate seeing ? If so, take up the picture of a heathen mother throwing her child into the mouth of a crocodile, and explain it to them. Tell them why it is that Christian mothers act differently. Then tell them of the various means to be made use of to prevent such scenes : appeal to their sympathies, and ask them if they would not rather send their cents to prevent such cruelties, than spend them for toys or similar things. Ask them if they would not like to go and tell those mothers that they must not do such wicked acts. And do you suppose that such discipline will make no impression ? It will make a strong impression ; and if care be taken to deepen this impression, by the time your children are four or five years old, these principles will be so firmly imbedded in their minds, that nothing, in after life, will be able thoroughly to root them out. O, there is much truth in what a celebrated French infidel philosopher said, when he exclaimed, ‘ Give me the first five years of a child’s life, and I will teach it to break every law of God and man.’ The church needs pious mothers, devotedly pious mothers, who, when they gaze upon their little infants, shall be heard to exclaim, ‘ If God will only

spare these children, we will, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, make such impressions upon their minds, by the time they are five years old, that they shall be constrained to obey every law of God and of man—impressions which shall constrain them to live and labor for a perishing world.'”—*The Redeemer's Last Command*, by Rev. J. Scudder, M. D., pp. 14—16.

(3.) *Teach the child to pray with reference to missionary service.* The author of these lines, under the convictions of what he is urging on others, has knelt in missionary prayers with his own little daughter, whom many would suppose quite too young for missionary zeal. But her tears and sobs, from the depths of the heart, and her earnest declarations for future missionary action, have followed the prayerful view of the state of the poor heathen. And she has become habituated, at her stated seasons of prayer, to the offering of distinct petitions for her future usefulness in some foreign field.

(4.) *Fix definite and deep ideas in the child's mind.* Appeals and instructions may be so complex, or so general and diffusive, as to leave the little mind overburdened or uninstructed. And the right impressions may, from lack of skilful aim and patient repetition, fail of depth and permanency.

(5.) *Finally, let stated efforts be perseveringly con-*

tinued. Be not discouraged if success seem a while doubtful. Would you desert a prized young tree, because, upon loosening the stays, it was found too weak to support itself? How should it be with the young immortal soul over which God appoints you a guide?

You are left, before God, with this topic flashing upon your mind. His eye is upon you. The path of duty is before you. The subject will be reviewed in the judgment. As you ask the question, Shall my child be a missionary? God help you to give an answer that you will there be gratified to remember.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

THE Saviour's bodily sufferings were not only such as any of us might endure, under the pressure of labor and torture, but were doubtless heightened, beyond the possibility of our experience, by the necessary sympathy of his body with an unfallen soul. With a sensibility unknown to us, he journeyed, groaned, and wept amid the world's moral wastes.

But turn from the effect on his body to the mental suffering. This, though so far less than the final agonies of atonement, may have too much escaped our consideration. Even in the far less exquisite pains of the body, arising from a change of climate, how much more sensitive is the frame of a stranger than the bodies of those who are dwelling in their accustomed latitude! In our fallen humanity perceptions are blunted; and, though we are linked to men by consanguinity and sympathy, our sympathies are much restricted to temporal interests. How far, then, beyond our appreciation, must have been the exquisite anguish of the soul of Jesus, on the way to a final self-offering, through the domestic and social

avenues of our race, and bound to kindred, and the whole race, by ties of consanguinity and purest brotherly love, and that love sympathizing with a survey fully extending to eternal destinies !

But we must look at further suffering. Behold his anguish in the garden. Think not merely of his trembling flesh. No sharpened instrument, as yet, pierces that. His soul is in the agony which forces blood in place of sweat. And all this is in dread only of something yet to come. The shadow only of it strikes him thus heavily. Look a little further, and see him as this mysterious something comes, or rather as he goes to it—not merely as his body bears, or is borne upon, a cross of wood. By a power, not in the feet nailed to the cross—unseen by a faithless crowd—he treads “the wine-press alone.” Does his body thirst? Let not your sympathies stay on that. Look further. But you cannot look far enough. Angels cannot. “*His soul*” is made “*an offering for sin.*” His soul thirsts, and thirsts in vain; yea, for the living God. An unearthly cry rings through the universe: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” A veil is rent in the militant church, but another veil, pierced in time only by Omniscient Justice and Mercy, covers a mystery of wonderful suffering which may be removed in the glorified church.

In view of a gift so unspeakable as the *atonement*, can we hesitate to make all possible surrenders to God? especially when the surrenders are needful to prepare us for the full benefits of the great sacrifice through faith? Let a sense of gratitude and of self-interest combine to move us.

DELIVERANCE FROM A HORRIBLE PIT.

A STRANGE and fatal accident is in the mind of the writer. The narrow mouth of a mountain pit had become so covered by snow as to be unobserved. A hunter, who had left home in the morning, returned not at night. The anxious wife and little ones kept the blazing fire and spread board in readiness, from hour to hour. But morning came without the hunter's return. Weeks and months passed, and hope had died in the mourning hearts, when the horrible truth came as a gun, and a skeleton, in mouldy garments, were discovered in the mountain pit.

Suppose that man, as was probable from the nature of the pit, not to have been killed by his fall, but soon left in darkness, as the opening above was speedily refilled by the driving snow. Suppose him groping in vain attempts to ascend, and at length finding himself helplessly sinking in *miry clay*—soon to be buried alive. At such a juncture, if a great cord had been let down with an invitation to grasp it, and be surely delivered, would he have hesitated?

The sinning one is in “a horrible pit of miry clay.”

As he attempts to descry an open heaven for himself beyond this life, all is dark. He is without light from the "Sun of Righteousness." And he must depend for deliverance upon something let down to him. He cannot succeed in attempts to "climb up some other way." And he finds himself sinking, being buried alive, in something worse than literal clay—*sin*. The "second death" awaits him. He is steadily descending. There is no remaining stationary in sin. The sensualist sinks lower and lower. The covetous man is becoming more and more earthly. The proud man's cravings steadily increase.

The soul is to be buried alive in sin. Horrible thought! The body's being buried in fire cannot be more terrible. The everlasting disappointment of desires, the eternal raging of ungratified passions, will be as intolerable as torment from flame.

Is there a mode of escape from this horrible pit? There is. A great cord is let down. It combines two strong strands. One is presented to the mind and heart by what Christ has interposed in suffering; the other by what he has interposed by merit. But there is an intertwining of these strands.

Does any reader say, "I fear the cord is not for me"? It is for you, if you are of mankind. If you were of the nature of angels, which the Saviour did not take upon him, then to you the word of salvation

would not be sent. But if you are descended from the "first Adam," the "last Adam" appears for you.

"But I fear I am an exception." You need not. Did not Christ "taste death for every man?" The provision is sure, though there is a condition, and you may be lost after all.

The condition we are now tracing.

"Alas! I fear I am too low in the pit; I fear that my day of grace is gone." Not if your hands are yet out of the clay. What does this mean? It means if you are yet where you can exercise a Scriptural faith—a confidence in the word of God—in "things not seen."

Faith, before you are obliged to assent by *irresistible evidence*, is essential to trial—probation. If your soul were leaving the body, and the pains of hell were taking hold of it, and surrounding fiends were assuring you that you had rejected the Saviour, then your believing and trembling would be wholly involuntary and useless. Your trial—that which will decide your eternal destiny—must be previous to such a coercion. *Your hands are now free.* You may grasp by faith the great cord of the atonement. How long this may be the case is another question. Then lose no time.

"But may I not deceive myself?" Yes, if you choose to hold the cord so loosely as to allow its slipping away without raising you.

"How shall I know whether it is thus passing through my hands—whether I am failing of right faith in the atonement?" Simply by observing whether you are coming up out of the clay—whether you find yourself in spirit, as well as in outward acts, leaving all the various modifications of the corruption of this low world.

Some persons get so high as to have only a slight foothold upon the clay, and then relinquish the tight grasp, as Satan suggests that, if the cord raises them further, they will swing in desolateness of spirit, with no earthly support, while yet there is no cheer from the light of God's countenance.

And what if there is no immediate light upon leaving the clay? The cord is raising you, while the light of heaven at the mouth of the pit is not yet reached.

"But God has so much against me! I have been such a sinner! my heart is sinking!" Beware! you are letting go the cord. Let your heart revive—since you have consented to leave the clay—as you reflect that "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah liii. 6), that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13), and that your release from the doom of hell may be sure in consideration of what he endured.

When the Saviour was in the agonies of the atonement, how would it have appeared if a man, under the sense of Divine displeasure for his sins, had attempted to climb the cross to add some sufferings of his own to the great offering? Such a one would have had need to be told that of the people there could be none with Jesus, that he would tread “the wine-press alone.”

Beware how you attempt in your mind to mingle your own sufferings—your tears, groans, or heart-aches, —with the atoning agonies of the Lamb of God! Then hold fast the cord which is lowered from heaven. Are you so doing? Then you are ascending. It will soon be light. If you catch (as is probable) but a faint ray at first, it comes from a mid-heaven sun. Despise it not—fall not back as have some, and sunk after all in the clay, doubting whether they ever had any light. Oh, had they praised God for the one ray, and held to the cord a little longer, they would have been brought fully “out of darkness into his marvellous light.” Continue then your hold. Be encouraged by a little light, and there will be an increase.

“But somehow I feel no confidence that God will manifest himself to such a one as me, and dwell in my unworthy heart; I have no face to ask so much.” Beware! This kind of reflection is a loosening of

the grasp. Does not the cord imply that you are to "ask in his name?" A check draws money from the bank by the signature—not the hand presenting it.

Then hold fast. You have passed the main points of danger. Now look up. Christ is all your plea. Look again. There! that was a ray! there is another! *there is a stream of light! there is a flood!* You are out! glory to God! You can say:—

"The opening heavens around me shine
With beams of sacred bliss,
If Jesus shows his mercy mine,
And whispers I am his."

"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Amen.

A BRIEF COMPARISON.

Is Christian perfection (we mean neither angelic nor Adamic perfection) attained at conversion? In a sense it is, and in a sense it is not. The candid reader will allow a comparison, without forcing it into unjustly minute applications.

All the parts of a *rose* may exist while yet the soft and tinted leaves are not fully unfolded to the breeze and sunshine. They may very soon burst forth. The rose, in this state, may be called, in a sense, a perfect rose, though it is cramped with a partial covering. But, as you look, it swells, more or less rapidly; finally, it opens fully, withholding none of its beauties and odor. It is now a perfect rose, in another and higher sense.

What if the rose, in the first stage of perfection, were closely papered and twined, and labelled a perfect rose? It would surely thus be made to fail of a second state of perfection.

PRIVATE PRAYER.

WHAT would the reader do to be *sure* of finally entering heaven? Rather, what would he not do? How cheerfully could he consent to physical and mental labor three hours daily for life! Mankind generally strain their powers thrice that time daily, with no higher aim than the supply of their current wants, and some surplus for an earthly future. Shall the joys of endless ages receive no hearty attention? A habit of secret prayer will not take three hours daily. An advising and judicious Christian is in advance of the writer in the opinion that, through grace, no soul will lose heaven who prays in secret, fully from the heart, stately as practicable, thrice daily. In this sentiment it is thought the reader will concur, after estimating the advantages now to be suggested.

1. *Secret prayer is a guard against hypocrisy.*

The soul addicted to regular importunities alone before God, being shut up from observance of fellows, is necessarily disciplined to act to be seen of him.

There is a freedom from any insidious working of a motive to keep up appearances—to maintain consistency as a professor of religion before men. Public prayer and social prayer are duties, but they are not a direct guard against hypocrisy, as the Saviour implied this to be in Matt. vi. 5, 6.

2. It peculiarly exercises and strengthens faith.

Alone, before God, without the aids to the senses which accompany other exercises, the suppliant soul is left to a naked faith—to efforts, which can speedily become successful efforts, to apprehend purely the invisible Divine presence. Thus arises a new, or an invigorated ability to realize what is “not seen,” and the general range of the objects of faith can become vivid to the soul.

3. It prevents undue dependence on the prayers of others.

Doubtless some hearts are exposed to this evil. But a presumptuous waiting for answers to the supplications of fellows cannot exist with the habit of frequent struggles for one's self.

4. The whole mind is more easily brought to bear upon spiritual objects.

When a person is entirely alone, his thoughts are most secure from impertinent subjects. This is the case in meditations upon temporal affairs. What man would not choose the aid of solitude, if some great

worldly results depended on exactness of reflections and of emotions? Shall solitude be denied to efforts for heaven?

5. It facilitates suitable temporal pursuits.

The fear that regular and full secret prayers will so take time as to conflict with these pursuits is just what deters many from the duty. But in reality (unless temporal success would become a curse, the very withholding of which would be an answer to prayer) the most direct way to what the world calls good luck is to take time daily to commune with God, and to be "set in the way of his steps." The business man may thus be put under drawings to conjunctures for success, which no human sagacity could design. Would a man traversing a mazy wilderness, by a narrow pass in the darkness of the night, be really losing time in needful pauses to replenish a lamp? Let no business man think there is loss of time in audiences with the Father of lights.

6. The force of habit becomes a guard to the soul.

Persistence in frequent repetition, even without regularity of intervals, can transform a nauseous and acrid weed to a sweet morsel under the tongue—can even enchain both body and soul to deadly potations, while the victim stares disheartened at the maelstrom-centre to which he is tending. And is there in *habit* no mighty power for good as well as evil? Verily,

there is. In what can it be more important to bring this force to bear, than in communion with God? In secret prayers, with no repelling from what is a while disgusting, or what must steadily remain hideous in prospect, and with the facility to cumulative force from regularity, a frame of heart may indeed be attained as remarkable for resistance to bad influences, as is that of the confirmed drunkards to good.

7. It furnishes desirable interruptions to a worldly frame of mind.

“What!” exclaims the bustling professor of religion, “drop all, step right out of my sphere of hurried effort, and take time for my mind to cool down, and comprehend a blessing from above? This will be too much at times for an active business man.” In this very violence to the worldly feelings—this very shock to the earthly drift of affections—is a special safeguard to the soul. The insidious reluctance to exchange the strange fire of business excitement for that fire which the Holy Ghost imparts in the closet, proves the danger of absence from the closet.

8. Apostasy can hardly result without times for its incipienties longer than those which occur between the stated prayers.

It is not to be expected that a Christian will leave God by a single step. The fatal process involves at first, under the cunning of Satan, a protraction of

slight and unalarming wanderings of affections and of triflings with conscience, "little by little;" "little foxes." These incipiencies cannot remain hid in regularly recurring and whole-hearted devotions. The hideous crocodile cannot start into life from the ichneumon's frequented path. Secret prayer meets apostasy in the germ. In full importunities in the closet, rebuking light from Omniscience will show the most minute deviations of heart, lips, or life. The bitterness of regrets for these, and right resolutions for future watchfulness, must precede the obtaining of a full blessing. The soul rises from prayer with a zeal to be on guard against occasions for such an unpleasant struggle the next time. And either sinning will draw to the omission of praying, under dread of penitent bitterness in wait, or praying will draw to effective watchfulness against sinning to avoid such bitterness.

In view of the guards adverted to, the conclusion is that, if the reader or writer should finally be lost, whatever else he may recollect in eternal woe, he may expect the fact will ever follow him, that if he had heartily prayed in secret thrice daily for life, he would, through the merits of Christ, have attained heaven.

A HINT TO OPEN DOUBTERS OF ENDLESS MISERY.

SUPPOSE a case. A young Universalist commences mercantile business. He believes hell is in this life, immediately following sin. He cheats a customer to the extent of fifty cents. As he reflects, he has some unpleasant sense of having done wrong. This he calls hell. But, terrible as are the Scriptural allusions to hell, that which the Universalist so calls can be ventured into again for fifty cents. At length the cheating becomes a habit. And none can doubt but that there may be attained a readiness for the dishonest gain of many dollars at a time, and that too with diminished remorse. Indeed, the laws of human nature are such that persevering roguery must finally enable the perpetrator to reply to the inquiry whether he yet feels a hell for sin: "O, no; I sinned myself fully out three months ago. By persistence in iniquity I have overcome the liability to what I understand to be hell."

Can we believe that the punishment appointed by undeviating Rectitude is in inverse ratio with the increase of sinning, and becomes a cumulative encouragement to crime? If any reader's common sense will not answer now, it will when before the great white throne.

(See the next article.)

HINTS TO SECRET DOUBTERS
OR
ENDLESS MISERY.

IF scepticism, out of the church, is subtle and insidious, so far as it is in the church it is not likely to be coarse and open. But when there is a withered zeal under the profession of belief in a most tremendous and heart-stirring motive, there may be at the root a species of the worm of infidelity. It may be hidden to careless self-examinations. But its gnawings can prepare the tree for the fire. The healthful in faith will have patience while space be taken for the endangered.

The soul is sleepless and ceaseless.

It is strange, when the qualities of matter and spirit are so evidently dissimilar, that any minds are so perverted as to question the distinct existence of the latter, and be contented in a terrible waiting for death to convince them of the existence of intelligence apart from matter. It will soon be known that,

instead of even sleeping till the resurrection, the spirit can be all eye, all ear, all intelligence, without clay, as surely as, on a much broader scale, can an angel, and the Divine Being himself!

And there will never be an escape from consciousness by annihilation. Ruined angelic spirits, as well as those of incorrigible men, will, according to Scripture, be "tormented day and night, for ever and ever." Of course there must be conscious being while "tormented." The Devil can be "destroyed" in no further sense than being put in this state—his final one, according to inspiration. (Rev. xx. 10.) The scriptural sense of the term "destroyed," therefore, in regard to him, or man, does not mean annihilation. The notion of a literal destruction of the soul, to which some have wrested the Scriptures in search for annihilation, really implies only a dissolution. The intelligent sceptic must readily allow that the term destroyed, when literally applied, as to a material object, can only indicate a division or dissolution into parts. Could such destruction be possible of mind, it would not annihilate its attributes more than it does those of matter. And attributes are all that we can deal with in matter. The essence itself is out of our reach. Now, as any essential attribute of matter would remain in every part into which it could be resolved, would not *consciousness*, an essential

attribute of mind, (certainly with fallen angels, and why not with man in eternity?) remain in every part into which any mind might be resolved? Surely no devil or man would have consciousness annihilated by being thus separated into a multitude of consciousnesses—an absurdity, in the Divine procedure, not to be feared by Satan himself.

WHY IS THE SOUL PERMITTED TO BE LOST?

In view of the spirit's ceaseless existence and invaluable nature, some may wonder why it is permitted to be lost—why it is Divinely permitted that temptation may operate with the possibility of man's fatally yielding? With our limited powers, how can we expect to comprehend the range of the Divine government? Even in an earthly one, the wisest regulations may appear strange to views merely local, and confined to immediate results. The eye of Omniscience has taken in the universe, and eternity to come. We should expect that the range of Divine administrations in regard to law, and penalty, and permission of evil—including the eternal damnation of devils and incorrigible men—when, necessarily to our frail minds, announced without the broad reasons in the Infinite Mind—would, at first, appear strange. In the revelations of science, how many truths have been announced, necessarily without their proofs, to un-

learned minds—which have been at first esteemed by such minds as strange, if not absurd? Then, in a revelation from God, upon abstruse things, in a far more subtle kingdom than that of matter, is it not *reasonable* to suppose that some things would appear strange, and, to careless thinkers, even *unreasonable*? Therefore, let it be remembered by any one who doubts his liability to so great a penalty as “eternal damnation,” that he will find no excuse in the misdirection of his reason, to doubting, or wondering at, the truths of revelation, instead of searching for evidence of the authenticity of that revelation, and of praying for light from his Maker. An incredulous or brazen staring at the truths is far from being the course to escape their final edge. There is no help for us but to assent to the Scriptures, upon the anterior evidences of their inspiration—as from miracles and prophecy—anterior evidences the certainty and significance of which convince all who do not allow their love of sin to blind them.

We shall doubtless, in eternity, receive abundance of reasons for many things strange to us here. We may find that Divine wisdom, in permitting beings to choose their way to hell, after ample provision and warning for their escape, permitted a less evil for a much greater good in the glorification of a class of beings from a state of trial; in the nature of things

capacitated (as the lost *might* have been) by that trial for "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" and a good, not merely in the case of those saved from our globe, but a much further extended good, in the evolving of principles and precedents in the Infinite economy, favorably to modify moral character, in myriads of systems to arise far on in eternity. Thus, to the Divine contemplations, far more good may have been seen finally to result from granting moral agency, and permitting the wilful to choose hell, than there could from creating man without freedom or probation.

This earth, small as it is compared with the universe, may be the stage for evolving the moral principles and lessons referred to. Let it be considered that the second person in the Godhead specially descended to this earth, and formed an eternal union with the nature of the rational beings upon it. It is a stage upon which the Almighty called for a "sword" to "awake" "against" his "fellow." (Zech. xiii. 7.) Wide as the universe is, or is to be, but one such stage may appear in the vast range of Divine administration. But if perfect mystery should to us surround the most terrible truth in that Divine revelation which rests impregnably upon anterior authentications, our very reason directs us to acquiesce in faith.

THE FIRST STING OF THE UNDYING WORM.

(A RECORD MADE NEAR TWENTY YEARS AGO.)

SOME months since, on my bed, a sense of apparent realities was produced upon my mind, about as follows :—

It seemed that my soul had waked to consciousness in eternity. I could look back on my past life as for ever closed. I began to recollect certain neglects of cross-bearing, and certain sins of commission which I had presumed were small enough to be safely indulged in by a professor of religion.

But now they swelled into mountains, under the glances of the eye of Jesus Christ. I saw plainly that I had carelessly ventured on in what had been forbidden by the Holy Spirit, and that the absence of a sense of danger had resulted from not calmly pausing to listen to the secret whisperings of that Spirit. And now I could not feel that it was possible for the Lord Jesus to say to me, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” On the contrary, as I thought on my past life, with its evidences of imperfect faith, I

could not but feel self-condemned ; and presently my agonized soul began to hear the language of Jesus himself, uttered directly to me, in substance :—

“ You have not done your duty. Look at your misspent life. You have been an unfaithful servant. You did not serve me earnestly enough. You sought your carnal ease by slighting your closet prayers. You refused to deny yourself mere trifles which I asked you to surrender ; and then, because they were mere trifles, you hoped to escape condemnation.” My conscience seemed to act as the servant of Jesus, in repeating the intensely tormenting truths. *I felt the first sting of the undying worm.* My whole soul, in remorse and strange horror, commenced to plead for a return to the world for another probation. “ O !” I exclaimed in intense anguish, “ if I were only back in that world of privilege, I would be in earnest—I would deny myself—I would do anything, make any effort to serve Thee. Let me go—let me go.” But I could realize no hope of such a privilege. It seemed to me that my soul *must* settle down in despair, under the overwhelming fact that it was *for ever too late* to make or keep resolutions to serve Christ. O how my conscience spoke ! O the remorse ! the despair ! the horror ! God only knows what I felt.

Dear reader, if you should die to-night, with what

consciousness would you wake in eternity? Will you not resolve with the writer to live just as you must suppose your spirit would promise to do, were it out of the body, unprepared, and could be allowed to return? But God will allow no return. If you go before Him, unprepared, will you not find attempts vain to offer a plea for a return, as you recollect you might have known on earth, by due pause and anticipation, what promises you would be ready to make?

May He not try you from this moment to see if you will live up to such promises? *The safe way is to live as if you were sent back. Then, in eternity, you will have no cause to wish for a return.*

INIQUITY IN THE HEART.

Look forward a little. Picture to yourself something of the last judgment. Let your imagination dwell upon what it cannot overpaint. See the Judge of all the earth upon his great white throne. "The Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door." *A certain class of professors of religion are vainly seeking to enter heaven.* (Luke xiii. 24, 27.) They stand without, and knock at the door, saying, "Lord, Lord, open unto us." The Judge answers, "I know you not whence you are." On earth they had fond hope. Their disappointment now comes. No plea avails. "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works?" "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." But there is no hope. The sentence sounds forth, "*Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.*" The secret of the ruin is in the one word "*iniquity.*"

And has not human nature come to the judgment deceived from the nineteenth century, as surely as

from the first? Was there not in that century a class of presuming Christians, who are also now to have the gate of heaven shut against appealing references to by-gone familiarity with the Head of the Church? Ah, yes; for in the later century human nature remained the same, and Satanic skill was undiminished; and the self-persuasion entertained upon earth of not being in such a class was no proof of safety; for, alas! a characteristic of deception was not to view one's self truly, and even to shrink, perhaps indignantly (as may be in reading this article), from suggestions of full tests. A secret opposition in lifetime to anticipation of judgment tests, should have been the startling proof of deadly infatuation. The *safe* soul dreaded no searching process, knowing the severest could only make more manifest the sure grounds of joyful confidence.

What can be said to any iniquitous one at the judgment-seat who attempts to plead his past deceived state of mind against the claims of justice? Could not the common sense of any impartial one in the judgment-crowd, if permitted, say to him, "You doubtless might have ascertained your true condition by a candid and patient anticipation of the tests of this day, by bringing your whole heart to the straight-edge of the Scriptures, as in the sight of their Author and your Judge. Had you thus condemned yourself, you

would not now be condemned. There was a remedy for guilt in probation. But you ventured on. What you flattered yourself was a manly escape from over-scrupulosity, was a postponement of detecting light to a remediless eternity."

O that such a one had known his own self while yet the cross of atonement was between him and hell! Now he must fully see his case, without a cure. Hark! must not his conscience, at least, hear from the throne, "When in the world of trial did your *heart* entertain evil? What, if you could not avoid temptation more than the passing of birds over your head, yet, after allowing evil thoughts, not only to find rest upon the head, but to remain pressing at the door of the heart, did you admit them, and welcome their nestling, flattering yourself that with no outward deed, you might be safe?" Hear the arraigned one reply: "Yea, Lord, I remember that I was so far guilty. I did not realize my soul endangered while I denied myself the outward act." "But did you not refrain from the outward act in order to gratify one inward sin which was in antagonism to another? Did not inordinate passion, or self-love, in one form, withhold you from the outward gratification of the same in another? And did not my word attach guilt to *covetousness*, *hatred*, or *lust*, though confined to the heart, and dis-

tinctly teach that they were *idolatry, murder, or adultery*, committed already in the heart?"

"Yea, Lord, but I did not anticipate the full application of such a rule in the judgment." "But did I not teach that the word should judge you in the last day? Heaven and earth can pass away, but not my word. Have you not deceived yourself with the lamp of life in your hand?"

"Ah, Lord, may there not be excuse for poor weak human nature, under the temptations of Satan?" "Not if that human nature wilfully neglected obtainable relief—the mighty aids of the Holy Ghost." "But, Lord, I never apprehended the necessity of damnation for those inward indulgences, if the outward life continued obedient." "This was because you remained deceived. Will it content you to have your body saved?" "Nay, Lord, not without my soul, which is my thinking self, craving endless bliss." "But only your body was free from the secret sinning. You did not carry out in the body the motions of covetousness to a thievish grasping of another's goods, nor the motions of anger to a literal smiting of your fellow, nor the motions of lust to the outward abomination. But the inward man committed the crime. The soul has become the guilty one. If a man on earth, while dreaming of using fire lawfully, had accomplished the physical deed of igniting a neigh-

bor's dwelling, and thus taking the lives of its inmates, would you have accounted him a murderer?" "No, Lord." "Why?" "Because his mind was not in the act." "The mind, then, being in an evil act, constituted crime?" "Even so." "Alas! then, out of your own mouth must you be condemned, inasmuch as your presumptuous hopes of heaven were drawn from the freedom of your body only from sin, while you must acknowledge your mind was in the crime. The pollution of the heart, therefore, must damn your soul. Only your body could enter heaven, but not that indeed, while it can never have powers and susceptibilities separate from the soul. And no lamentations now can prevent your being for ever lost; for since the judgment is set there is not, there never can be, in the whole of the Divine resources, any atonement or saving process for you. He that is filthy, let him be filthy still."

"*And he was speechless.*"

FOOLISH TALKING AND JESTING.

"Nor foolish talking, nor jesting." (Eph. v. 4.)

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." (Matt. xii. 36.)

IMAGINATION can suddenly transfer us to the judgment-seat of Christ—but no more suddenly than will be the real summons “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” “as the lightning.”

Are we there? Then hark! Does there not come down from the great throne, among the judicial inquiries, one in regard to that sinful use of the tongue which men were most prone to think excusable, and which therefore wrought the wider ruin?

“Did you indulge in *foolish talking or jesting*, not merely such social pleasantry as could be in union with joy in the Holy Ghost, but words that gratified impurity, with a double meaning, or levity with trifling, or vanity with wit?” “Yea, Lord, I did at times thus venture with my tongue, yet I did not see

how I could thereby expose my soul, while designing no harm, but social gratification of others, as well as myself." "But did not my word expressly forbid foolish talking and jesting; and ought you not to have refrained, even though ignorant of the process of their fatal action? That process you can now trace. Recollect, when in sweet communion with God, as you entered a certain social circle, if you had been asked as to your spiritual state and prospects, you could readily have answered that all was well, that you were the Lord's—that heaven was in view. But, in that company, you felt stirred to utter the prohibited words. The persons around you were free, easy, and witty. Your Christian decorum was appearing singular. And, though a solemn whispering—gentle for adaptation to moral agency—went through the cells of your heart, assuring you it would not be for the Divine glory, or your real happiness, yet your tongue transgressed. You granted sustaining, vent, and fuel to a strange fire. A new fire—not from God—warmed your soul. As you left the company conformed to it, instead of having done what you could to elevate it, had you been asked as to your spiritual state and prospects, could you have readily answered, as when you came, that all was well, that you were the Lord's, that heaven was in view?

"Did backsliding consist in the falling of the physi-

cal man, as from church-steps, or a precipice, or in the falling of the spirit from communion with Him, who is a spirit? Could spiritual safety exist with a habit of breaking away from God?"

"*And he was speechless.*"

OUTWARD ADORNING.

“If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the *lust of the eyes*, and the *pride of life*, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”—St. John.

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold.”—St. Peter.

“That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.”—St. Paul.

“*And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*”

SURELY by three witnesses, especially such as John, Peter, and Paul, a truth is sufficiently established to be apprehended as a test in the last day. To a faithful conscience and sober imagination, is there not from the judgment-throne the inquiry, “Did you indulge in the outward adorning forbidden by inspiration—not unconsciously, under a perverting early training and false glosses of the rules, but knowingly, against the manifest drift of the word and the whispers of conscience?” “I recollect so doing, but I did not

fear condemnation for pride, while aiming to maintain only a level with others—to conform to the standard of my social grade." "Was not your chosen standard one of the world, and not the one of my word? Was it safe to follow a fashion which was forbidden by inspiration? Ought you not to have suspected some subtle self-deception in fearlessness of such transgression? Were you secure by being in the broad way, and among the many? If you ought not to have been singular from the many, because of possessing singular light, yet you ought to have realized that an aggregation of beings could not destroy your individuality and personal responsibility—that, as the word taught, every one should give account of himself to God. But did not pride hold you to the showy badges of your level, lest you be mistaken for one of a lower class—lower only in an arbitrary and worldly sense? And was it not pride which kept you from exposure to the brazen charge, from the votaries of fashion, of superstition, hypocritical plainness, or reducing religion to dress?"

"*And he [or she] was speechless.*"

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE DEVIL.

LOVE is heaven. "God is love." (1 John iv. 8.)
Pride is hell. "Pride" is "the condemnation of the devil." (1 Tim. iii. 6.)

Pride will be seen after the day of judgment to be the same element, from its first fountain in Lucifer, on beyond its last bubble in a probationer, to its eternal eddying in the lake of fire.

The penalty around the sin will be distinct from the sin. But the sin must produce dire effects in the nature of things, as well as meet the penalty. There is an awful philosophy of eternal torment to be traced in incorrigible pride. And "behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to *convince* all that are ungodly." Let the proud probationer be entreated now to follow some thoughts which in the great day may be pressed upon his conscience and reason. Will he be as apt to deceive himself, if he imagine truths as coming from the judgment throne, as he would in adopting a less startling process? Listen! "What is needful to give you—a proud being—heaven, considering

heaven as a state of contentment and gratification; that is, what is needful to satisfy *pride*? whether as it operated in Lucifer, son of the morning, when he purposed to ascend above the heights of the clouds, and be like the Most High; or in Nebuchadnezzar, as he boasted of Babylon, and his own might and majesty; or in Herod, welcoming the idolatrous shout; or in weak women with their cauls, and round tires like the moon, and chains, and bracelets, and rings; or in any son or daughter of Adam, as modified by his or her sphere and circumstances? Would it content pride to receive admiration, followed by ascriptions of praise and glory to the high Source of every good and perfect gift; an adoring gaze through and beyond the creature, resting only upon Him who maketh one to differ from another? Would not pride in its very nature demand, as essential to gratification, that the admiration and praise remain on self; *that self take the place of God*? the essence of Lucifer's sin having entered all proud spirits. Now as heaven is the beatific vision and ceaseless and unreserved adoration of God, it must follow that, in order to give enjoyment to a proud being before the throne of God, there must be a turning aside of some other beings from the flow of heavenly bliss, in a prostration of their admiring powers to the proud one. Will God attempt to give a state of satisfaction to a proud

being, by depriving others of heaven? Even if he should would the proud being find happiness? Must not pride, in its very nature, ever aspire above its present level; and if allowed a full race in any being, would it not end where it began, in one who contemplated no being above him but the Most High?

“Pride does not seek food for a healthy appetite, but fuel for a flame. The more there were vouchsafed, the higher would be the blaze. And were all proud beings to receive the successive elevations which Omnipotence might grant, then all proud beings would become fallen archangels, and find the depth of a fallen archangel’s hell.

“A proud being cannot have heaven. A proud being must have hell. It is unavoidably demanded in the nature of things, as well as in justice. And since probationary privileges, since the pleadings of a Mediator, have ended, there is no remedy. Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

“*And he was speechless.*”

LOST RELATIVES.

GOD permits but few or no instances of a person's having positive evidence that a loved relative is eternally lost. Many circumstances, unknown or insignificant to the cold heart of the public, become palliatives to the fears of private affection. And where, by death, a tare has really been sealed to the judgment, its roots have been so delicately intertwined with those of the living wheat, that a soft, as well as strong Hand, will manage the case. But very little may be known till the ties of a family, higher than any of earth, with a great Father at its head, shall be exquisitely substituted for probationary attachments.

There have been strong queries—first in the heart, and then in the intellect, of some persons, how one could be happy in heaven, while a once-loved relative is for ever lost. Now, let such querists observe that all endearing ties on earth subsist in that natural affection which is implanted by the Creator for purposes of this life only; or, subsist in a knowledge or supposition of desirable qualities of the loved object.

The first source of attachment will, of course, not belong to the eternal family in heaven. As to the other principle of endearment, let it be supposed that the admirer of a rose should eventually find it a dark and corrupt mass upon the earth, devoid of symmetry, color, and odor. Would he still bend to it in attachment? Was he not attracted by the symmetry, color, odor—not the abstract substance. Now, a lost spirit will be—and, in the light of eternity, will be known to be—utterly devoid of any real or supposed desirable quality with which it was ever associated to the eye of truth, or the fancy of ardent friendship, of poetic love, or of parental fondness. The rose is not recognized. The symmetry, the color, the odor, are gone for ever.

The two secrets of earthly attachment will fail in eternity. *In heaven there will be no mourning for a lost relative. Let the downward-going relative think of this.*

GROWTH IN HEAVEN.

THE vastness of the material universe, in a system of systems of nebulae, as further and further disclosed to us with the increase of telescopic power, may threaten to dishearten the soul with an idea of its own insignificance. But let the soul gird up itself in humble dignity, and press up to its true inheritance. God sustains in the brain and heart of a Newton, orbs of thought and emotion (with Himself for a centre), more wonderful than the outward creation: ethereal powers and capacities, which, before their growth in heaven, may go forth with a strange elasticity and measure, and comprehend the grosser galaxies.

But the already capacious spirit may grow in heaven for ever. What if it find there many saints and angels far in advance of it? *The present measure of the highest angel must of course be attained by an endless growth*, and, though that angel will ever have gone forward, he will never have a measure of bliss,

which the spirit following will not also *attain, and, in its turn, pass beyond.*

The man who will leave such a field as this, to gratify an earthly ambition, may expect to deserve and to have eternal damnation.

17 *

LOVE IN THE TRINITY.

IN the far past of God's existence, when there was no created being, was there a Divine solitude? Was there no flow of reciprocal love—of fellowship and communion of persons? “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old” (Prov. viii. 22), may be said by a Divine personality of love, as well as of wisdom. He can add, “Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.” (Prov. viii. 30.) It was against this “Fellow” (Zech. xiii. 7) that a sword was awakened by the Lord of hosts, which would have drunk up the blood of Adam’s race. This “Fellow,” when “manifest in the flesh,” said, “O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” “For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” (John xvii. 5, 24.) In mystic and loving oneness with these two is another Divine person, “the Spirit,” “the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost.” (John xiv. 17, 26.)

And now let it be observed, that creation resulted from no dependence of the Trinity upon extraneous sources for the bliss of loving, and being loved, but from disinterested benevolence. To what is infinite, nothing can be added. How ready then should we ever be to subject our own will to the will of our Creator, in the confidence that he desires our best good!

THE EXCELLENCY OF LOVE.

INTELLIGENT beings are so constituted as not to be happy except in a state of *being loved*, and of *loving*. All desirable aspects, in all ranges of things, or beings, present modifications only of this state, or dependencies upon it. If a being, neither loved nor loving, were enthroned amidst the greatest glories of earth, or of the outward glories of heaven itself, might he not, at least to himself, mutter, in a deeper sense than did one of old, “All this availeth me nothing”? Would there not be more true happiness without the glories supposed, if, at his side, even a brute fawned and spoke love as well as it could?

And happiness must be heightened according to the grade of being in connection with which the loving frame exists. It would rise indeed higher than with a brute, if with a human being, though that being should be incapable of appreciating all our moral tastes. It would rise yet higher if with one on the same level of sympathy, and perfectly fitted for communion. How, then, if with an angel—how, if with all the heavenly host of created beings! But *how*

much higher, if with the INFINITE GOD HIMSELF !!
Here is heaven. And does not God love? "He that planted the ear, that formed the eye, that teacheth man knowledge" can "hear—see—know." (Psalm xciv. 9, 10.) Then, surely, if He has taught man to love, he can also love. How, Christian reader, have you felt his love! How was your "heart strangely warmed"! Is it not so now? What a mystical bliss arises, as your love springs up to meet the Divine! You cannot describe it.

Love is not the prime element of bliss for creatures only. Jehovah chooses it for himself. "God is love." (1 John iv. 16.) He rejoices to "shed abroad his love in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us." (Rom. v. 5.) "He will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." (Zeph. iii. 17.) His love, in its refinement, must be beyond the exact comprehension of our powers of short and dull experience in love. It is the same towards us, in its exquisite nature, with the outpouring of Deific warmth between the Persons of the Holy Trinity. Here is the proof: "I in them, and thou in me." "And hast loved them as thou hast loved me." "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them." (John xvii. 23, 26.) Wonderful love! . The creature is filled with grateful, adoring amazement. Language fails. The dying

Fletcher knew languages, but, as the blaze of this love flashed on his spirit at the gate of heaven, he declared : “I have received such a manifestation of the full meaning of those words ‘God is love,’ as I can never be able to tell. It fills me every moment. God is love ! Shout, shout aloud ! I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth !” And he contemplated the change of one vague sign for another as he proposed a motion of the finger for that of the tongue : “But it seems as if I could not speak much longer. Let us fix on a sign ;” (tapping twice with his finger,) —“now I mean God is love.”

O reader, open your soul as much as possible “to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” (Eph. iii. 18, 19.)

“This, this is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend,
Whose love is as great as his power,
And neither knows measure nor end.”

Here is love, higher indeed than from brute, or man, or angel. Is there any higher grade of love than that of the Being above all others in infinite excess ?

SUFFERING IN LOVE.

THE business of life is to obtain and retain religion. Retaining it would seem the more difficult, judging from the greater prevalence of professions of having got it, than of professions of having kept it. The secret of the retention, as well as of the obtainment, is *the crossing of one's own will*. The efficacy of the atonement and the efficiency of the Spirit must indeed be kept in view. But their continuance, as well as their commencement, is sure to the passively willed believer. Now, in retaining religion, the wrong direction of the will, which must be denied, is a rebellion against *love*; for love, considered with reference to God and fellows, is religion.

A steady maintenance of love, under trying dispensations of Providence, and strong provocations from fellows, must involve much *endurance—suffering*. But the great difficulty will be at first. The process will become easier and easier—the danger of backsliding less and less. A stability in religion will be attained by the persevering, incredible to that lamentably numerous class of converts who yield upon

the first severe trial of all their grace—the “temptation” exactly up to what they are “able to bear,” though not “above,” as they imagine, in contradiction of an inspired assurance. (1 Cor. x. 13.)

1. *The flow of love to God will be opposed by pains of body.*

The soul will find it hard work to gird up itself by faith and independent placidity above flesh and blood, and say, “The Lord is my portion. He is my all in all. I have all things in Him, and He is my all in all things.” In anguish of body, this is difficult. But it can be done. And there will be an increasing facility in the sublime exercise. Suffering, endured aright, impels the soul higher and higher in God. Establishment in grace ensues, such as the reader may have seen indicated by the quiet lips and love-beaming eyes of some sorely-stricken saint.

2. *Love to God will be opposed by pleasures as well as pains—by gratifications of body or mind—at least in prospect, under Satanic proffers.* At times the faithful soul may undergo a painful struggle in refusing even to look upon the spreading charms, “innocent enjoyments” in worldly phrase, guilefully proposed by the tempter. As there are some truly innocent indulgences of body and mind, the reader may ask what is to be the guide? what is to discover the line? It may be answered, that, on what Scrip-

ture is not specific, the question should be, "Can I bring this gratification into the presence of God, and can it stay there in harmony and communion with Him?" If not, whatever may be the standard of the world in regard to the indulgence, the soul must deny itself, or leave God. But, like acts of denial of the palate at the too well furnished table, every successful struggle will leave an increased aptitude for triumph; and, under the force of a spiritual habit, there will be attained a holy indifference to what once aroused strong proclivities.

3. *Love to a fellow may be assaulted by ill usage, with the aggravation of affected superiority.*

The suffering one may find it a very severe task to maintain meekness, while treated as an underling, an abject, and while Satan whispers, with exquisitely provoking skill, "The offender supposes you are just fool enough to bear it." But you can bear it; and bear it without being a fool—without, in any sense, degrading yourself. Your meekness will be the "meekness of wisdom" (James iii. 13); and as to dignity, you will be "better than he that taketh a city." (Prov. xvi. 32.)

4. *Love is often met by the misconduct of a subordinate.*

The aggravation is that in your position you have a peculiar right to an opposite deportment. Base

ingratitude and gross impudence combine to provoke. But you may find relief in thinking of One very high, insulted extremely by those who, compared with him, were indeed very low. Yet there was no calling for legions of angels to chastise the underlings. From the very inferiority of the offenders, the suffering One's supplicating love drew an argument: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34.) He left "an example, that ye should follow his steps." (1 Peter ii. 21.) "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.)

5. Love may have to contend with severe provocation from some one closely related to you.

The bitter reflection may be, "It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance." (Ps. lv. 12, 13.)

Satan may urge that the near ones of all other persons are free from such an eye-sore as the offending one presents. But they are not so closely inspected. Two statues of equal failure of finish would vary in appearance if but one were kept near the eye.

6. Love may be sorely beset by peculiar unreasonableness in trespass against us.

But, however harassing may be this feature of

assault, we can maintain the victory of love, in the consciousness that so doing is *our own reasonable* part to act.

7. Akin to the foregoing aggravation is the marked *injustice* characterizing some acts of ill-will. One's clear rights may be so manifestly outraged, that indignation may, at first, seem a virtue. But forbearing love is still the virtue. "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." (1 Peter ii. 19, 20.)

8. *An onset may appear so purely malicious* as to render it very difficult not to return a hearty hatred. But let it be kept in view that retaliation must transform the aggrieved into the same satanic image with the aggressor—rendering two souls instead of one a prey to the destroyer. What is thus to be gained?

9. The difficulty of patience under wrong-doing may be greatly increased by *an apparent impossibility of saving the cause of God—the best interests of souls—from suffering from the misconduct*. Satan will archly strive to draw the zeal of piety to a termination in the fire of rancor towards those who are at once

the enemies of God and us. But we may rest in love. Without volunteering to fight for God's glory, we may say to him, in strong faith, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee : the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

10. A strong discouragement to the exercise of love may arise from *the apparent uselessness of forbearance to the culpable one*—love being steadily met by unmodified and dogged ill-will. But say not that the severe effort of maintaining love is of no use. It is of use to the sufferer, if not to the offender. The student, in the exercise of swinging dumb-bells, is doing naught of use, *i. e.* to others, but it may save his own life. All the hard exercise of soul which God permits to his children shall add at least to their own health and vigor.

11. *The seclusion of one's sphere of suffering*—the absence of appreciation and pity from all others as well as from the injuring person—may leave some hearts much depressed for a time. But, after one has patiently "suffered awhile" under this peculiarity, it will be made to "establish, strengthen, and settle" the soul in God. May it not be a crowning exercise towards a full fixedness in grace, to feel great need of encouraging sympathy, and yet be cut off from all beneath the Infinite Source? God is thus fully found. If even some object delicious to the palate may be

the more enjoyed in freedom from admixture, surely the soul's bliss is not reduced by an exclusion of all beneath the true portion.

12. Akin to the obscurity of the sphere may be *the smallness of the details of one's suffering*. The soul may be much tempted to discouragement from the supposition that it neither receives nor deserves credit from God or man for patience in little things ; that, if public torture or martyrdom were permitted to Christian faithfulness, there could be a noticeable achievement ; but that there is an insignificance of effort in overcoming the every-day trifles which vexatiously assault a loving frame. This is indeed a mistake. During a few weeks more may thus be really endured than in a martyrdom. Hot sands may extend to an aggregate far beyond the bulk of the rock ; and to tread the former a long way may be more painful than to be crushed at once by the latter. Some saints may go up from the endurance of little things to a higher place in heaven than they would reach through martyrdom. Omniscience can make a close inspection, and apportion a full reward. And if little things be harder to bear because of their littleness, and a consequent tendency to become disheartened, then the greater reward will accrue.

13. Another discouragement to a sufferer may be the thought that *the assault comes upon him for his*

own fault. Under the question, "What glory is it if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?" the soul may be tempted to think nothing can be gained. But there is safety if no "glory" in it. And safety will lead to glory. There is something to be gained. If one has obtained forgiveness from God for a fault, the earthly consequences may be endured with a sense of innocency, even as if suffering for the fault of another.

14. A person may be strongly inclined to surrender a loving frame of heart under the consciousness or satanic accusation of *having partly failed*. There is a diminished motive to sustain one who bitterly concludes that he has no longer a full Christian character to maintain. If but a statue or painting become marred, its preservation is less prized and less cheerfully labored for. It is related that a maiden, who had been charged by her deceased mother with the keeping of a necklace as a memento, having indignantly refused to exchange it for another ornament, was enticed to part with one of the beads, under the plea that enough for a string would be left; and that then she was induced to surrender three more, inasmuch as the set was already broken; and that then the wily barterer proffered very tempting apparel for all the others, meeting her declaration that she had promised to keep the string of beads, by the assurance that

she had now no string to keep, and that the remainder might as well be yielded. This account illustrates Satan's process of inveigling a soul out of grace, at every stage of which there is increased difficulty in repelling him; in guarding what has decreased in valuation. And while the partially backslidden should resist discouragement, and yield no further, all Christians should ever be ready to hold fast what they have under any disheartening *appearance* of having lost ground—a temporary illusion from the arch accuser of the brethren.

15. The *unexpectedness* of an assault upon love may be the aggravation. The sudden jerk of an opposing wrestler has the more effect if unanticipated. Let the soul be on the lookout for abrupt onsets from men and devils, and thus avoid a paralyzing surprise to patience.

16. A trial may be fiery and *undefined*. The heart may find itself in an *indescribable* struggle to retain the loving spirit. It may seem for a time that an opposing force is about to be victorious, while there is neither time nor skill to characterize its provoking elements. The mystery of the assault makes it the more appalling. But a few moments of steady and calm resistance will allow the elements to be defined. If any one appear which is not glanced at in this category, the reader may resolutely dispose of it with

spiritual philosophy, and victoriously march on, the stronger for the struggle.

17. An attack may seem intolerable from *repetition*. But let no sufferer think, because a constant dropping can wear a stone, that the soul must yield. The soul is not a stone; and frequent pressure may be met by increasing rigidity and power.

18. Finally, a trial may have been or may threaten to be so *long-continued* as to seem overpowering to the patience. In such a conflict the heart should grasp the truth that, relatively to one's eternal race of being, there can be, in a trial even for life, but a hand-breadth more of rugged ground, and that, possibly,

“The rougher the way, the shorter our stay;
 The tempests that rise
 Shall gloriously hurry our souls to the skies;
 The fiercer the blast, the sooner 'tis past:
 The troubles that come
 Shall come to our rescue, and hasten us home.”

And surely, “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.”

REJOICING IN SUFFERING.

If an orphan were transferred by adoption from a hut of want and cruelty to a palace of beauty, abundance, and love, would he appreciate and enjoy his new state the less because of the past adversity? When the child of God shall be surrounded and filled with the glories of heaven, will the bliss be lessened by recollection of the "much tribulation" through which he had to "enter into the kingdom of God"? Surely his "eternal weight of glory" will be "far more exceeding" in consequence of "affliction."

Let us glance at some of the rapturous contrasts of heaven with earth.

1. The redeemed one shall possess *a body* "*fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body.*" (Phil. iii. 21.)

Certainly this body will not be insensible, but a structure with sources and susceptibilities of bliss, under Omnipotent love, far beyond our present conceptions.

Will it lessen the felicity then, to recollect physical toils, pains, agonies, and death? Let us, therefore, submit to the ills of the body, not merely with stoical philosophy, saying if we must, we *must*; but "rejoice,

inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter iv. 13.)

2. When our heavenly Father shall have taken us fully to himself, and be rejoicing over us "with singing" (Zeph. iii. 17), will our exultation be diminished by recollection of probationary chastenings from his hand? An earthly parent may imagine that a child may be drawn by release from discipline to the more filial love. But such a child would not be fitted to prize parental love, and exercise a return for it, as would one under judicious chastening. The faults cured—the painful process ended—parental smiles would be welcomed and appreciated in a sense unknown to the over-indulged one. And when the great Parent shall wipe all tears from all faces of his children, and sweetly assure each of an eternal freedom from the need of chastening, then the rapture will not be lessened by remembrance of the severe and mysterious dealings of Providence, when "no chastening" seemed to be "joyous, but grievous." (Heb. xii. 11.) Therefore, "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. xii. 5, 6.)

And if we can trace a severe affliction to the interposition of wicked men or of Satan himself, let us not

despise it as something only evil, and faint under it, with the reflection that, though it might be patiently borne if from the Lord, yet it is intolerable in view of the source; for neither men nor Satan could do aught to Job, nor can they to God's children now, except under permission of an overruling Power and far-reaching designs of grace.

3. *In heaven God will be revealed without a cloud.* We shall see His face. Will it lessen the bliss of the beatific vision to recollect the probationary efforts of living by faith? and how, again and again, "for a season," there was a "need to be in heaviness through manifold temptations"? (1 Peter i. 6:) how (as saints who had a melancholic temperament will review) the accuser of the brethren at times cast down the conscientious heart under false fears of having grieved the Spirit?

Let the Christian be patient under such a cloud, and find safety even in despair, if need be, by resolving that, if he sink to perdition, it shall be while striving to serve God as well as he knows. Thus he will be sure to attain eternal sunshine; and he will rejoice in it the more, in consequence of his constitutional despondency.

4. When the redeemed one finds himself actually before the throne of God, as *sure of endless bliss* as is the durability of that throne, the consciousness of

safety will afford none the less exultation because of the *cautious fears of probation*. A sense of deliverance from danger is gratifying, in proportion to the magnitude of the evil escaped, and the security for the future. There is a breathing easy—a sweet relief—upon discovering some horrible sensation of earthly peril to have been but a dream; or upon really escaping physical effects from a sinking boat, or unreined horse; but there will indeed be more exquisite exultation upon realizing escape from exposure to *hell*, and of its being beyond an *impassable “great gulf.”* While some persons pride themselves upon eschewing all sense of liability to endless woe, and would, were they admitted to heaven, be doubly disqualified for a rapturous sense of deliverance, let us walk circumspectly: “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” The sense of eternal safety will be the sweeter, because of the probationary—the cautionary fear.

5. “*There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God.*”

There will be no toil in heaven, though doubtless an ever ravishing exercise of glorified energies.

May we not believe that the Divine Presence will be as free for the soul and as easily and sensibly appropriated as the air is now for the body? The saint’s

exultation will not be lessened then, by remembrance of the struggles of faith, when God was neither received nor retained without arduous effort and vigilance. "Let us therefore" cheerfully endure to walk by faith, and in every appropriate way "*labor* to enter into that rest." (Heb. iv. 11.)

6. It will certainly be *as easy for the saint to serve God in heaven as it is for the sinner to serve the devil on earth.* The saved being may go with the current. Both will be right. Self-will, in heaven, will precisely accord with the Divine, and shall for ever be fully gratified. Will the bliss be diminished by recollection that *no change of earthly circumstances could lessen the warfare of the full Christian life?* Indeed, it will not; and a cheerful practical reference to this fact may be of great moment to the reader.

To say nothing of a probable increase of difficulty in maintaining sensible communion with God, were wealth, reputation, and social relations just such as self-will would choose, it is manifest that there would be no decrease. If the world were adjusted to suit one, there would certainly be none the less tendency to that love of the world which excludes "the love of the Father." (1 John ii. 15.) If the Emperor of Russia and a banished serf in Siberia were to start in a race of piety, and progress alike, the serf's warfare would be no more than the emperor's. True, the lat-

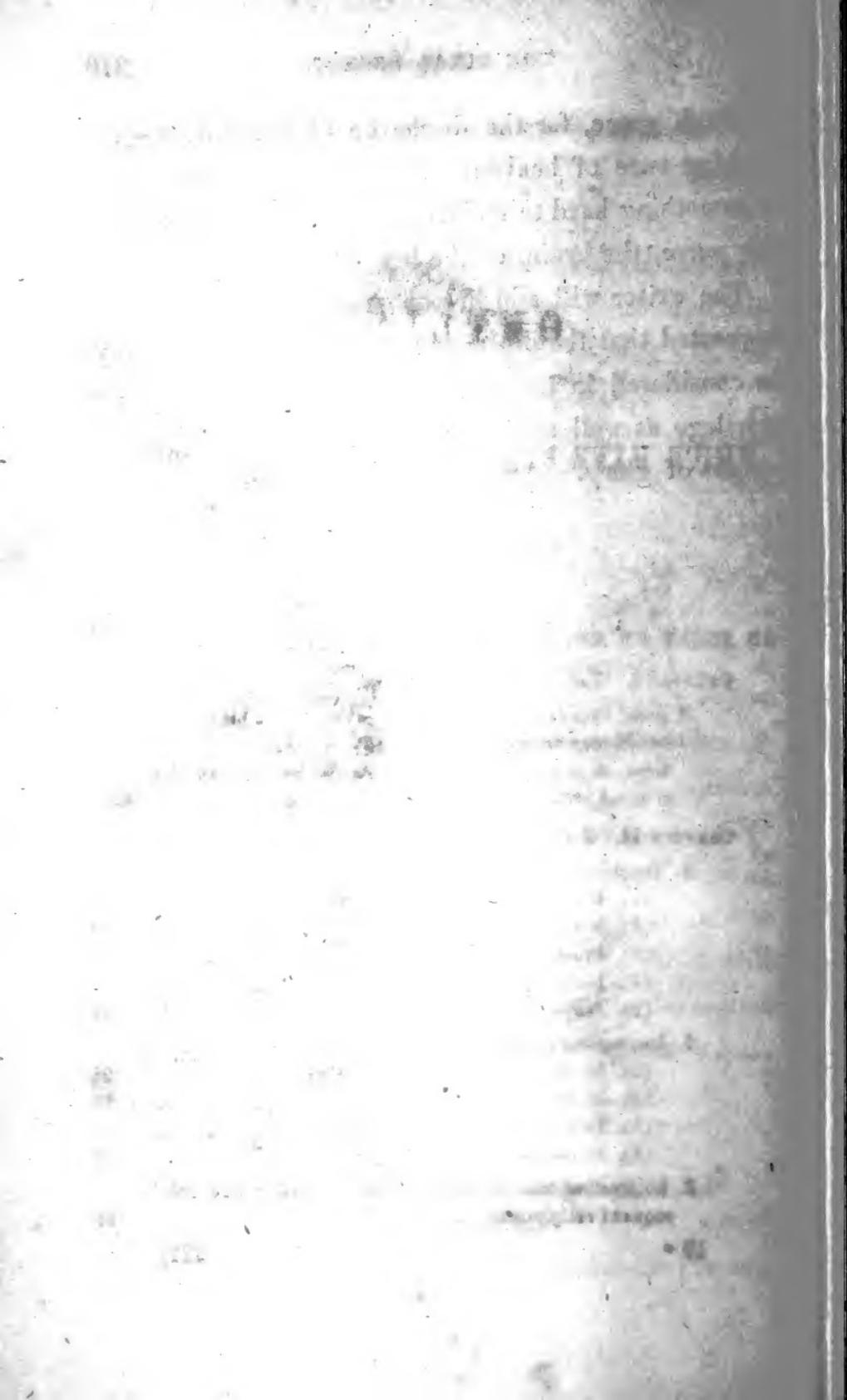
ter may have his furs, his fires, his family, and his flatterers ; the former but just enough mitigation of frost and forlornness to keep the soul in the body. Neither shall be tempted above what he is able to bear. But the emperor will find it as hard work to maintain full communion with God under his temptations as will the serf under his.

Is it not wise for each Christian to welcome the kind of warfare incident to his temporal sphere without muttering a futile preference for the sphere of his neighbor ? Each saint must have a full and steady trial ; but in the unopposed flow of heavenly bliss there will ever be the more ravishing contrast. Who would not row steadily against a current for five minutes to rest in peace and plenty the remainder of his life ? And who would not for the five minutes welcome a severity of the current, were the severity to fix the degree of earthly bliss ? Lifetime here, is, compared with eternity, indescribably less than the five minutes compared with the lifetime. Who will not, then, during life, cheerfully endure hardness and *severe* hardness, when, according to the degree of it, is to be the degree of endless joy ?

“ Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings ; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” In never shrinking from suffering may be found the secret,

through grace, for the discharge of every duty—for making sure of heaven. Failure occurs when there is something hard to endure, whether it be a tax upon the purse, the brain, or the heart.

The writer will add but one more sentence. It is requested that the duties inculcated in this book may be considered in connection with the thought of this privilege as well as duty of suffering for the greater weight of glory. Amen.



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THE END.

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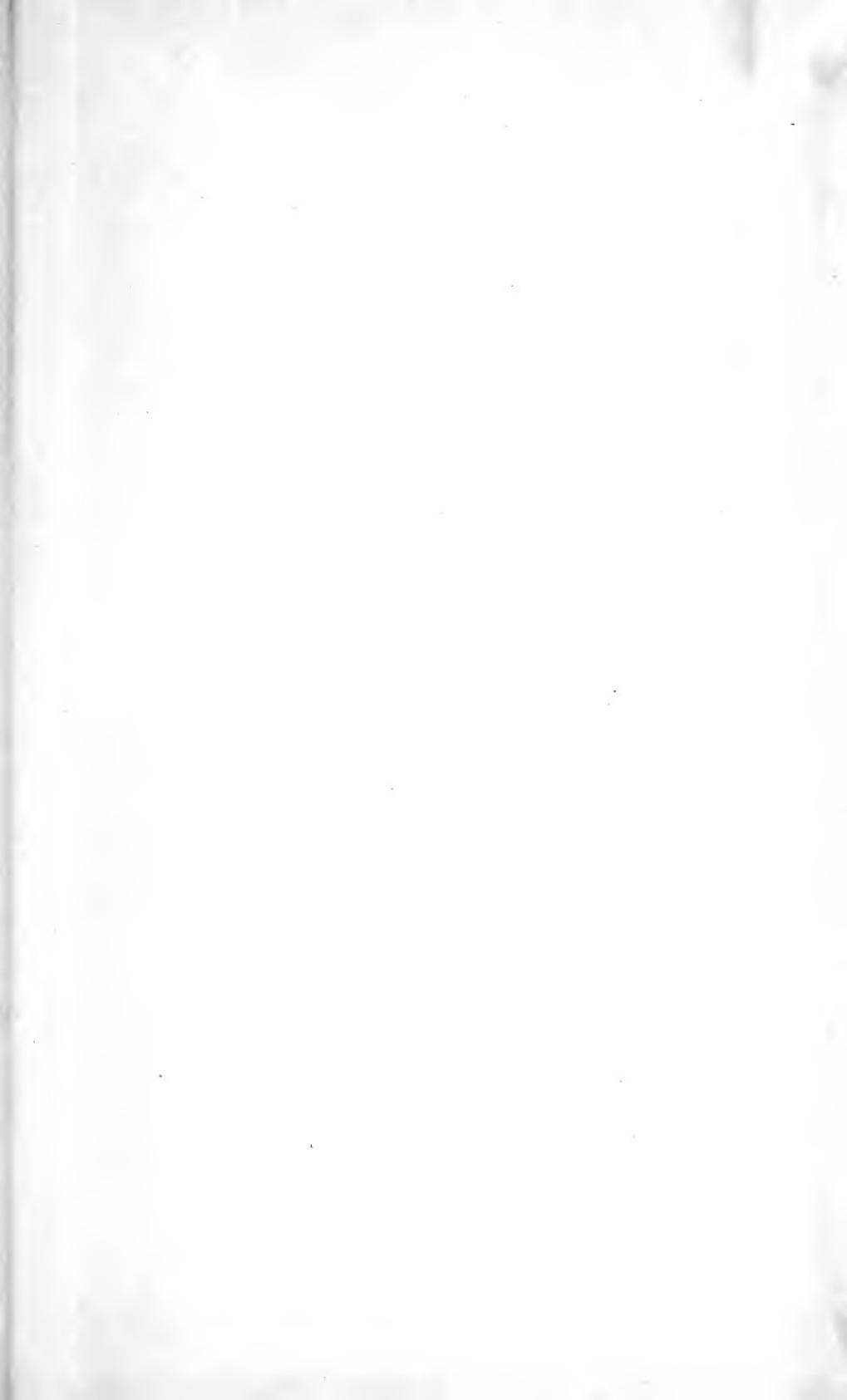




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